LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

Lal Bahadur Shastri may have been small in size but he had an immense vision. Determined to build a new India, he took on every challenge with a cheerful smile and a humble heart. Years of hard work took their toll, however. In her moment of triumph, the country was suddenly left grieving for a wise, honest and courageous prime minister.

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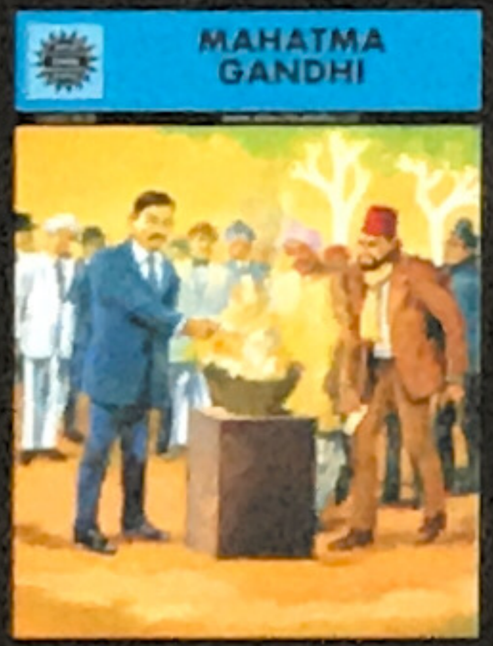

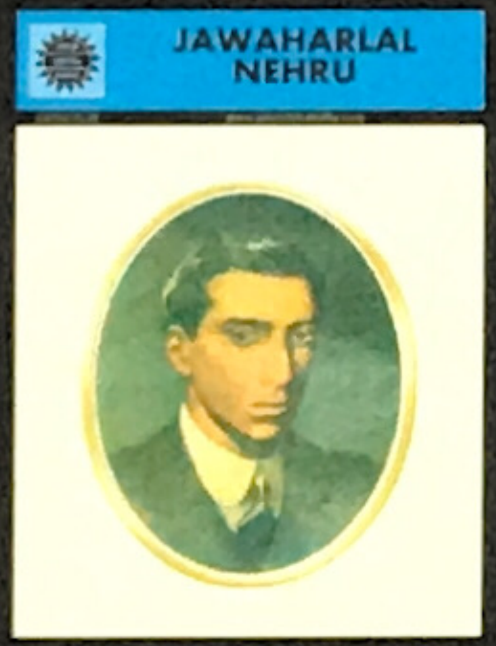

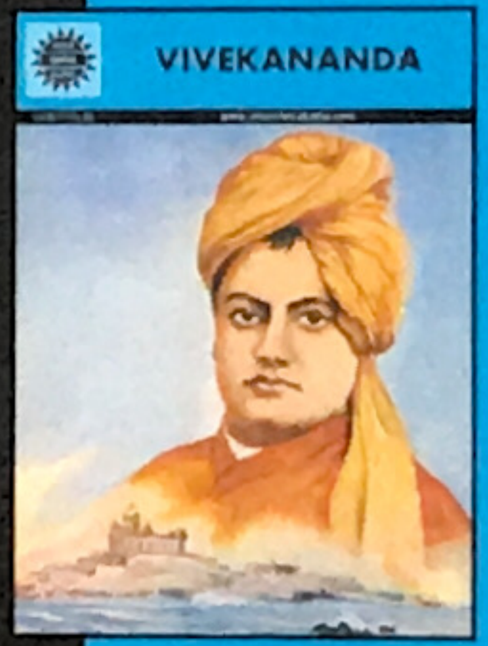

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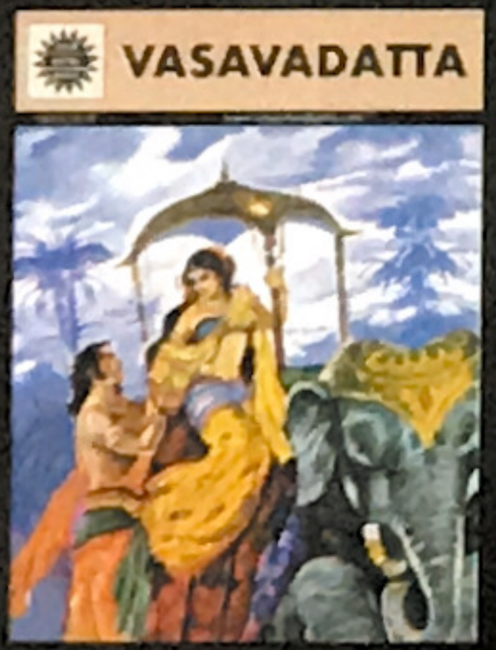

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LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI

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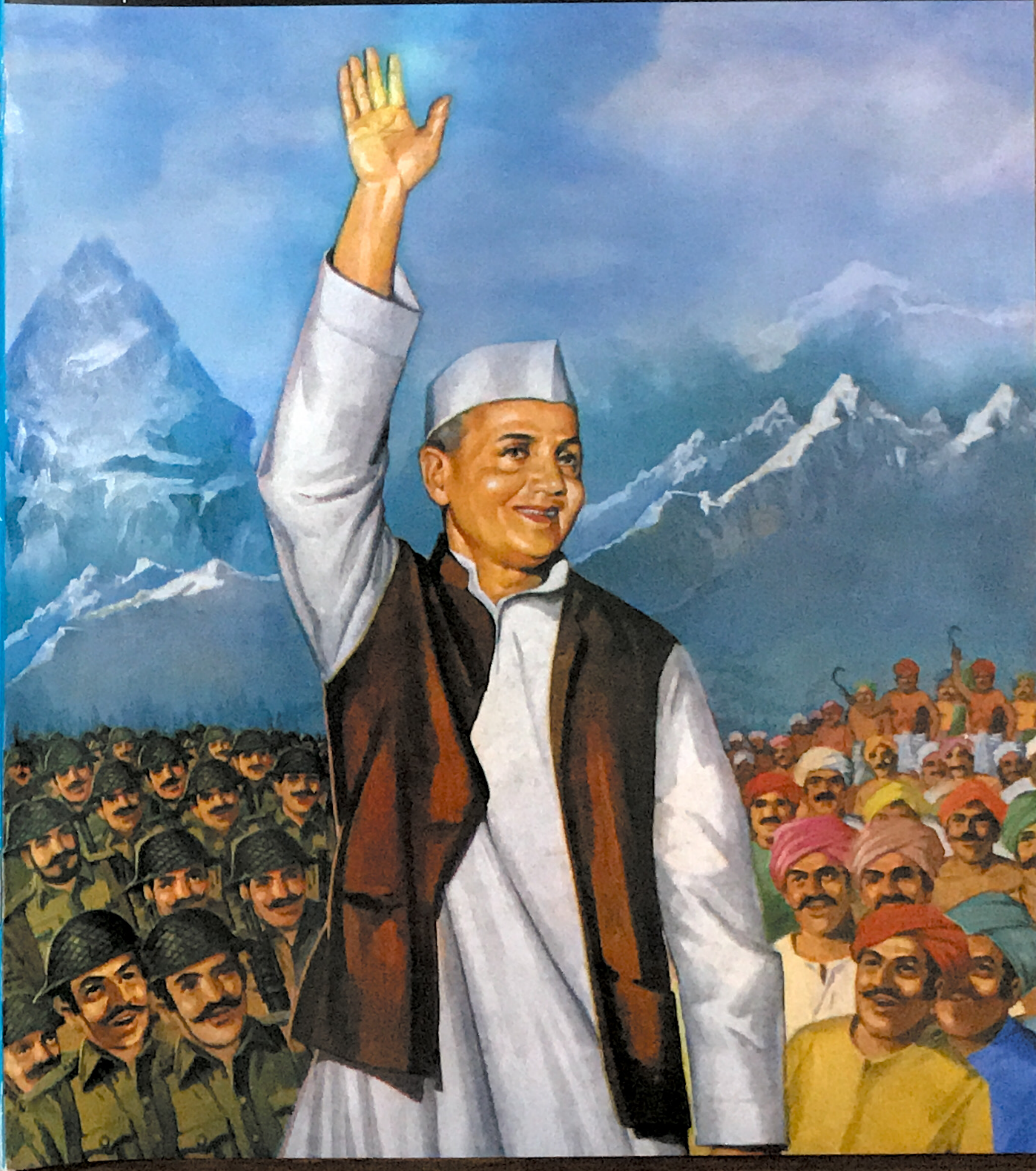
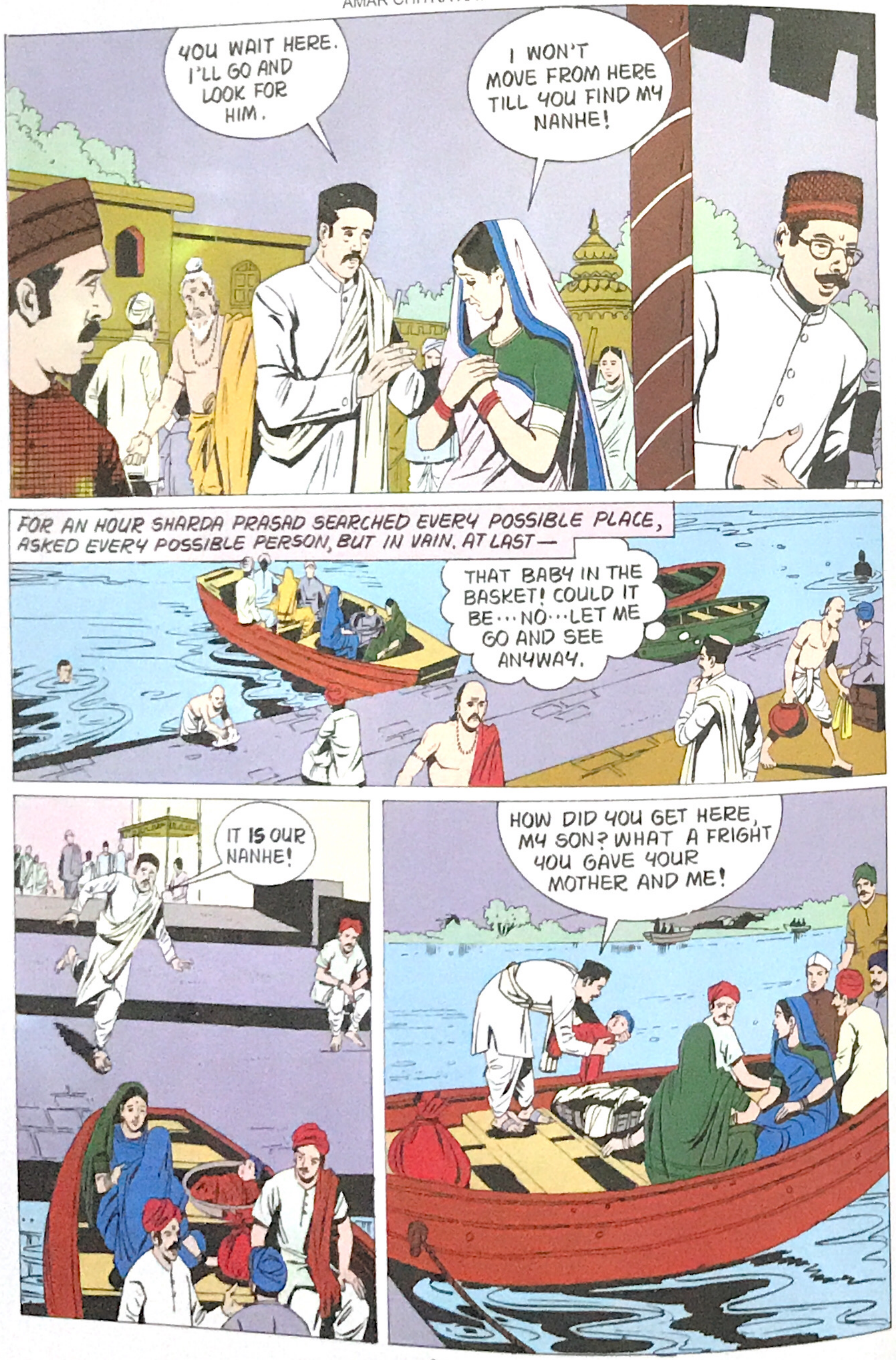
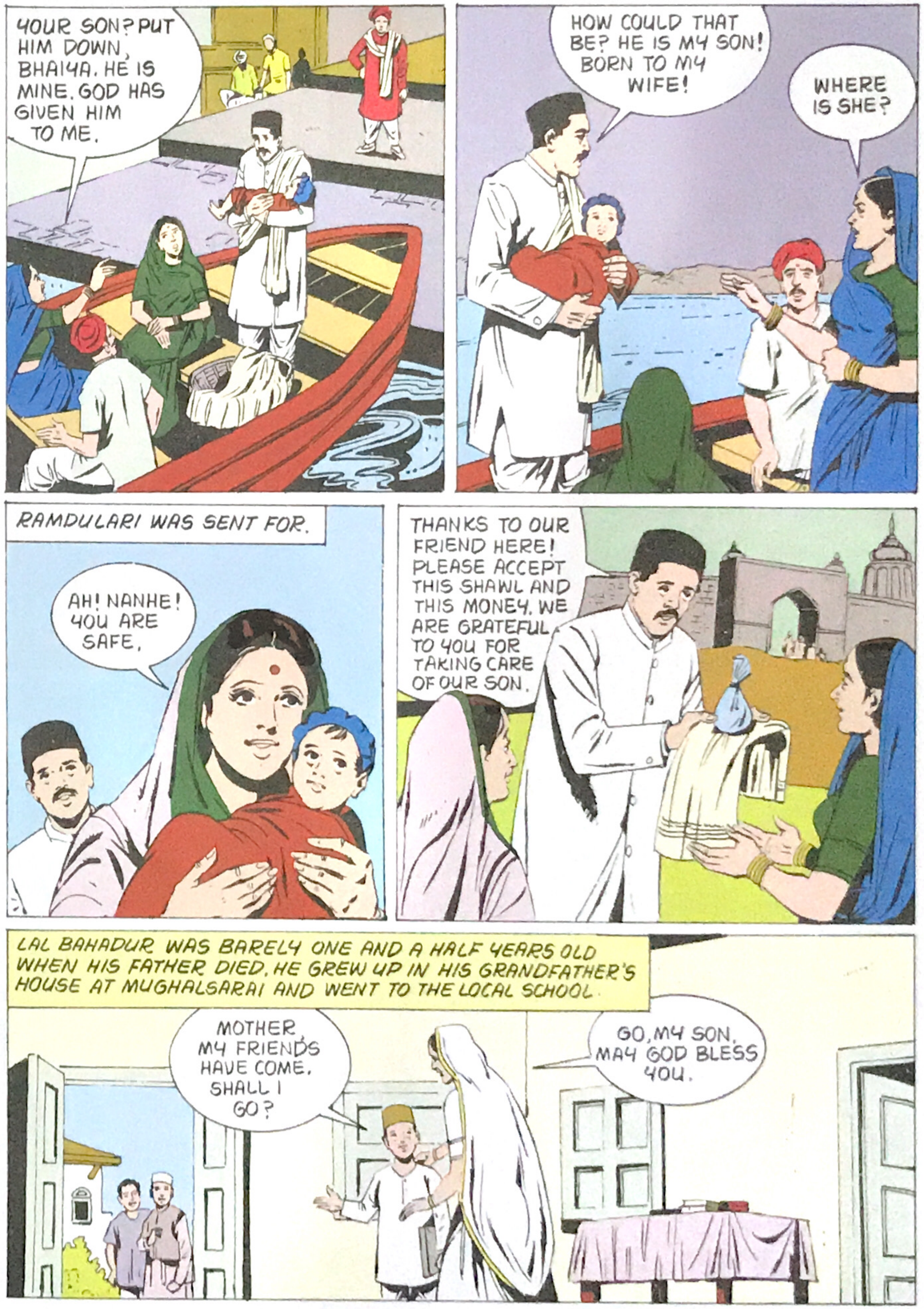
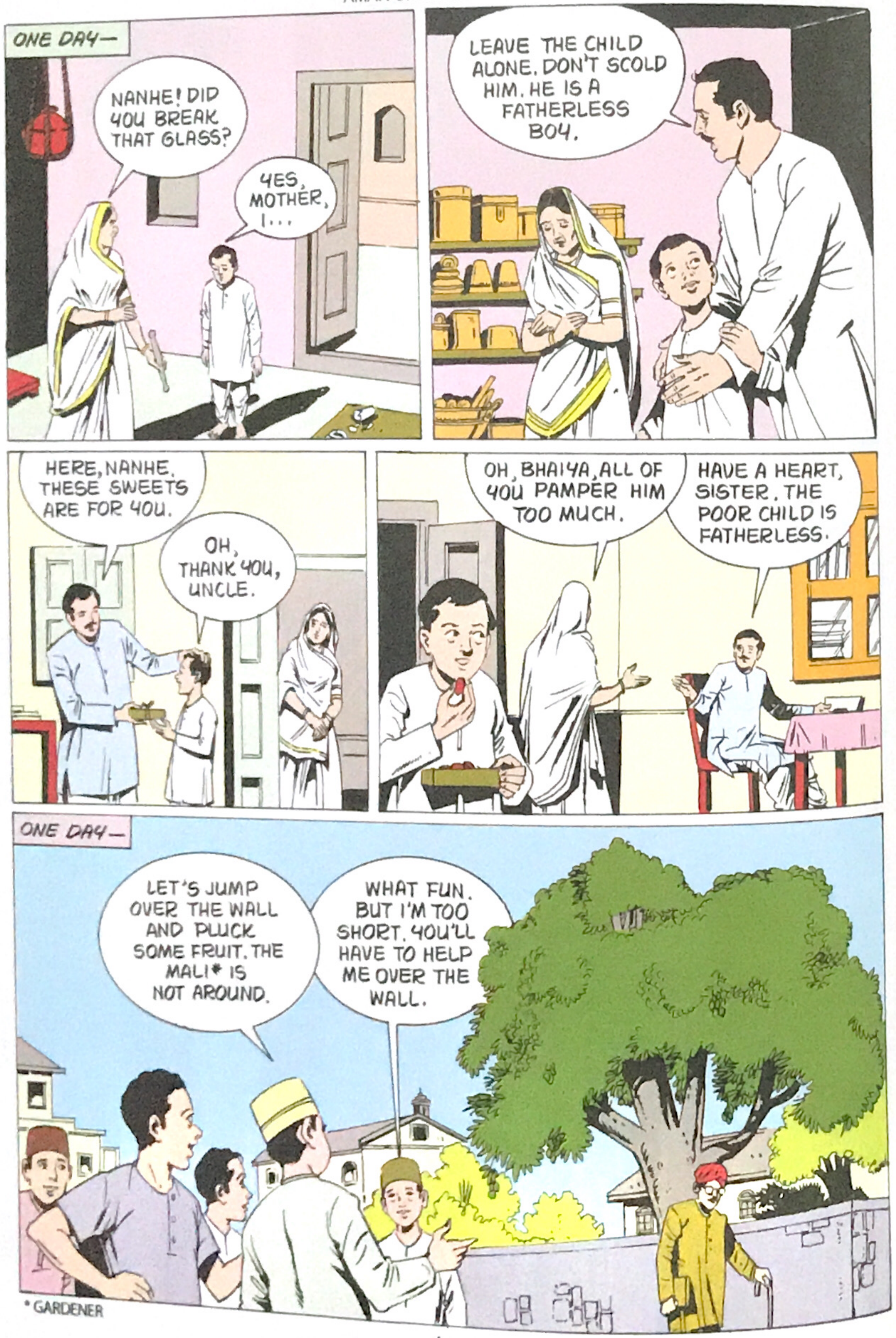


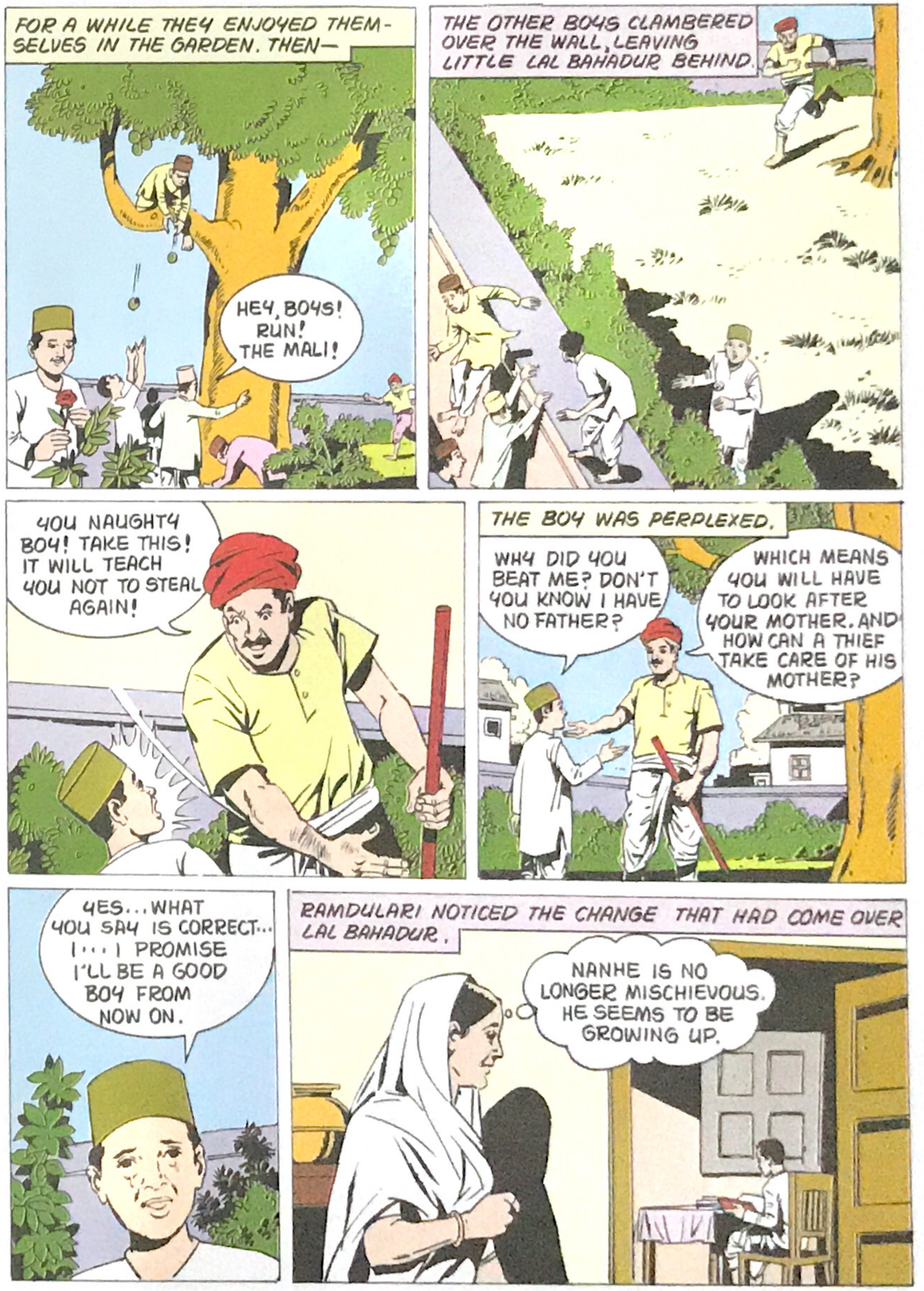
* LAL BAHADUR'S PET NAME

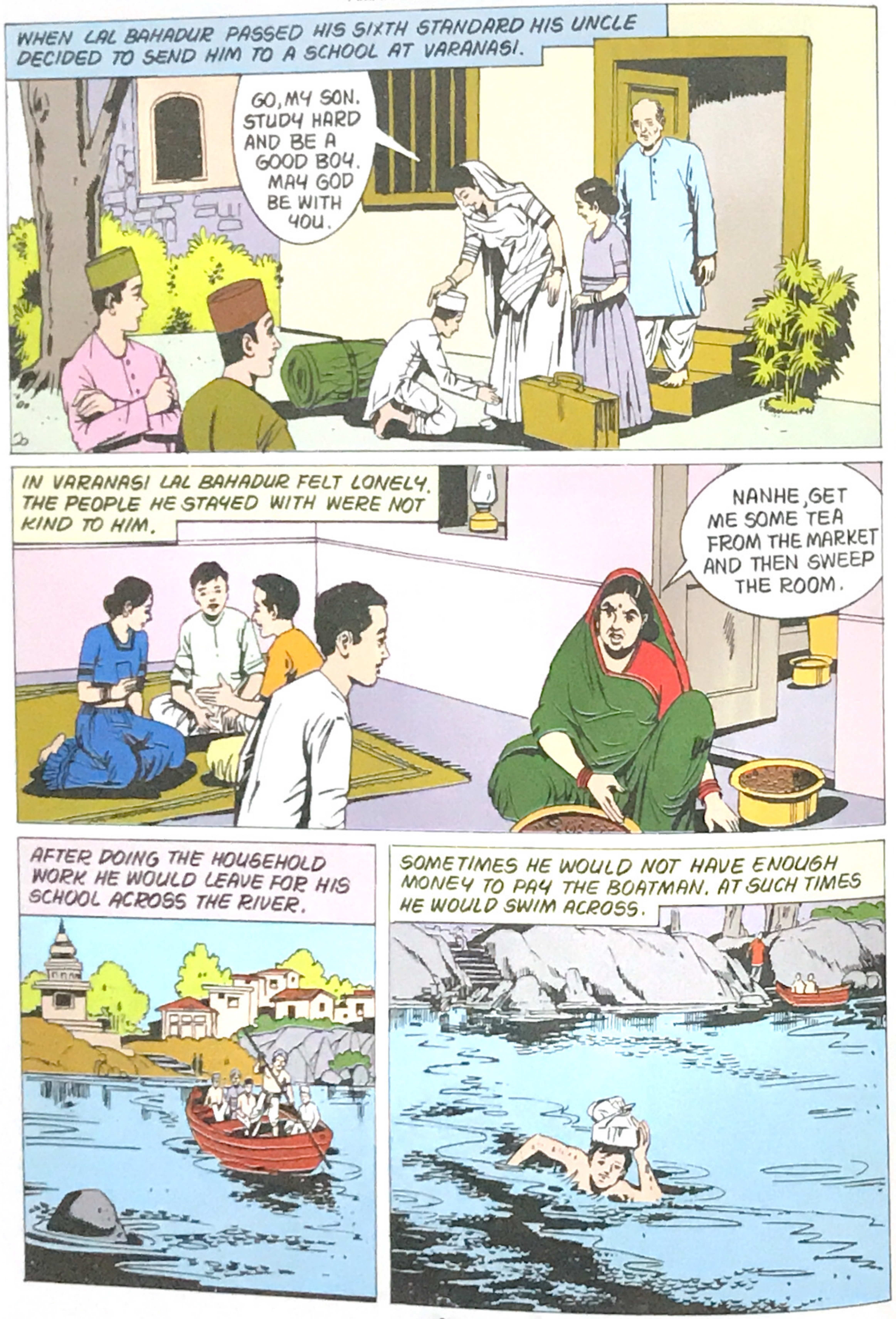

YOU WAIT HERE. I'LL GO AND LOOK FOR HIM.
I WON'T MOVE FROM HERE TILL YOU FIND MY NANHE!
FOR AN HOUR SHARDA PRASAD SEARCHED EVERY POSSIBLE PLACE, ASKED EVERY POSSIBLE PERSON, BUT IN VAIN. AT LAST —
THAT BABY IN THE BASKET! COULD IT BE···NO···LET ME GO AND SEE ANYWAY.
IT IS OUR NANHE!
HOW DID YOU GET HERE, MY SON? WHAT A FRIGHT YOU GAVE YOUR MOTHER AND ME!

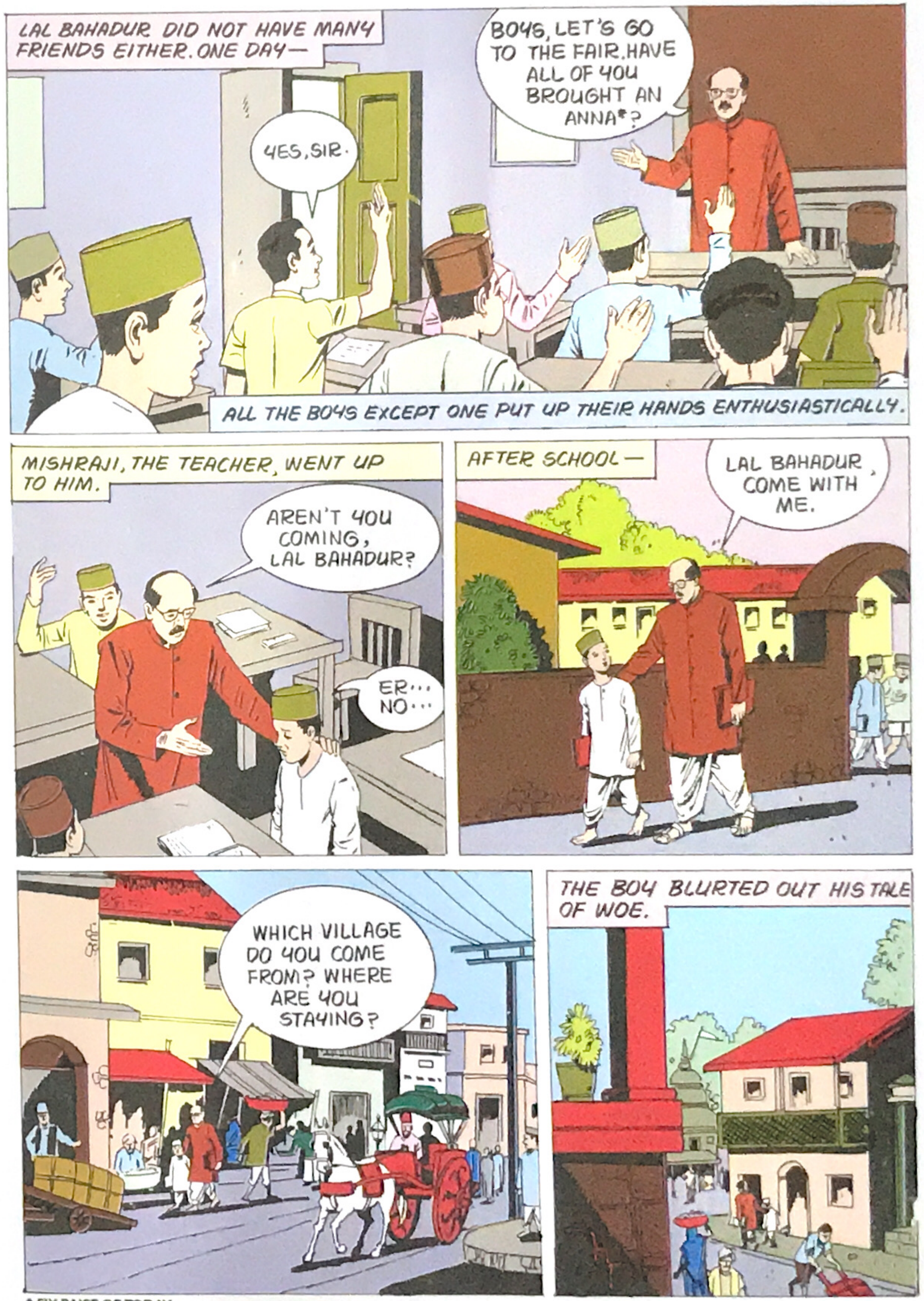

YOUR SON? PUT HIM DOWN, BHAIYA. HE IS MINE. GOD HAS GIVEN HIM TO ME.
HOW COULD THAT BE? HE IS MY SON! BORN TO MY WIFE!
WHERE IS SHE?
RAMDULARI WAS SENT FOR.
AH! NANHE! YOU ARE SAFE.
THANKS TO OUR FRIEND HERE! PLEASE ACCEPT THIS SHAWL AND THIS MONEY. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF OUR SON.
LAL BAHADUR WAS BARELY ONE AND A HALF YEARS OLD WHEN HIS FATHER DIED. HE GREW UP IN HIS GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE AT MUGHALSARAI AND WENT TO THE LOCAL SCHOOL.
MOTHER, MY FRIENDS HAVE COME. SHALL I GO?
GO, MY SON. MAY GOD BLESS YOU.


ONE DAY—
NANHE! DID YOU BREAK THAT GLASS?
YES, MOTHER, I...
LEAVE THE CHILD ALONE. DON'T SCOLD HIM. HE IS A FATHERLESS BOY.
HERE, NANHE, THESE SWEETS ARE FOR YOU.
OH, THANK YOU, UNCLE.
OH, BHAIYA, ALL OF YOU PAMPER HIM TOO MUCH.
HAVE A HEART, SISTER. THE POOR CHILD IS FATHERLESS.
ONE DAY—
LET'S JUMP OVER THE WALL AND PLUCK SOME FRUIT. THE MALI* IS NOT AROUND.
WHAT FUN. BUT I'M TOO SHORT. YOU'LL HAVE TO HELP ME OVER THE WALL.

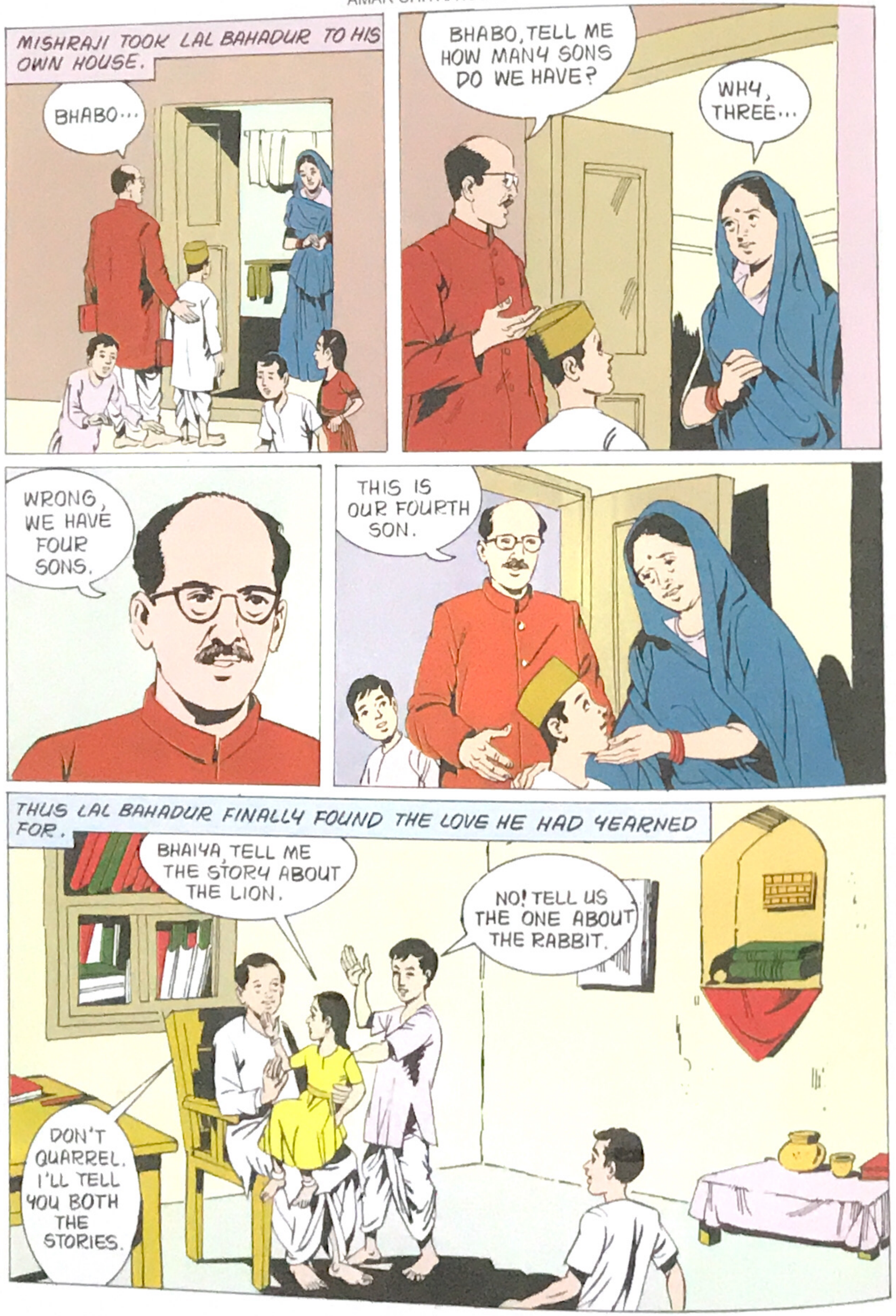
* GARDENER

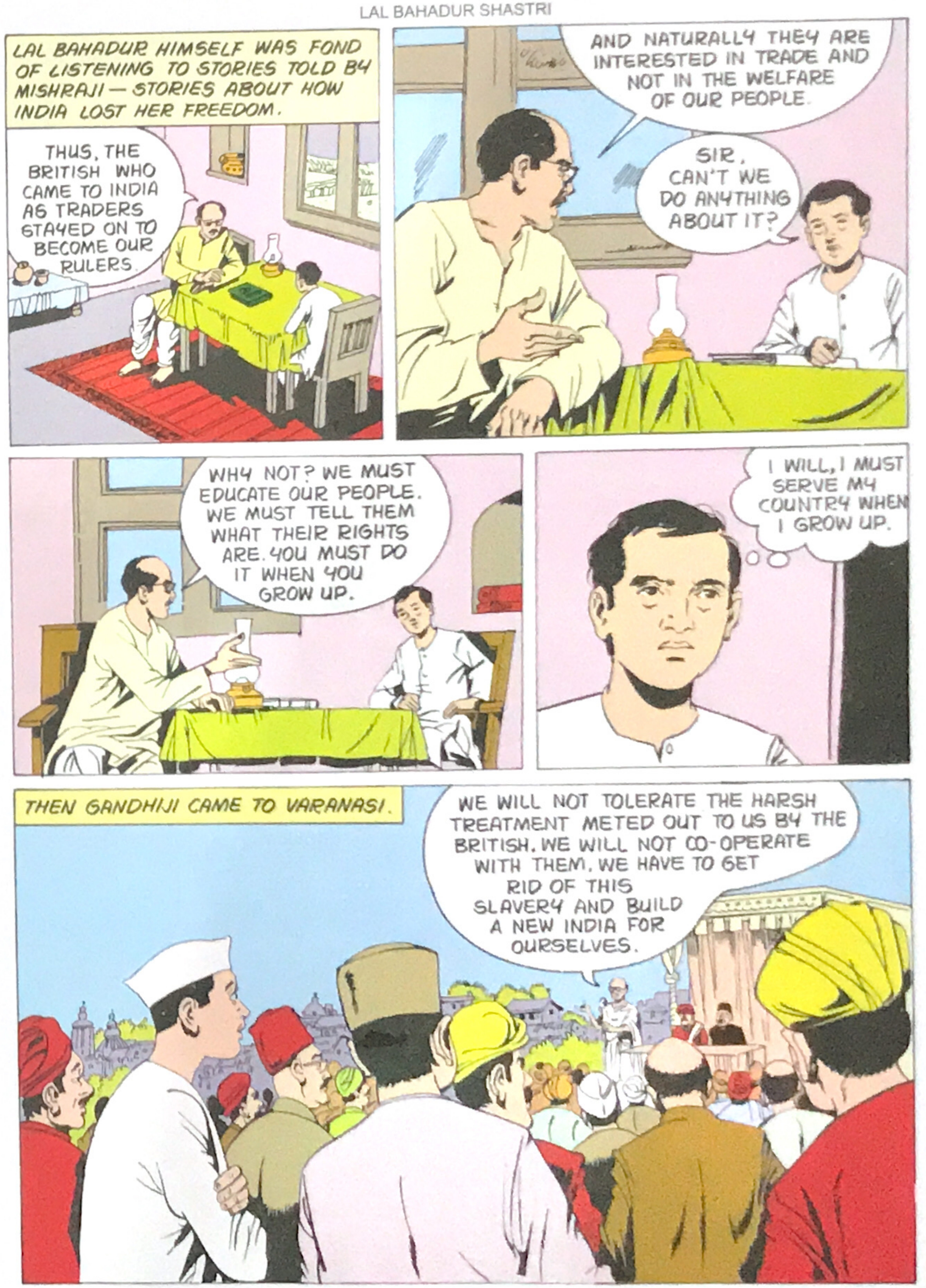

FOR A WHILE THEY ENJOYED THEMSELVES IN THE GARDEN. THEN—
HEY, BOYS! RUN! THE MALI!
THE OTHER BOYS CLAMBERED OVER THE WALL, LEAVING LITTLE LAL BAHADUR BEHIND.
YOU NAUGHTY BOY! TAKE THIS! IT WILL TEACH YOU NOT TO STEAL AGAIN!
THE BOY WAS PERPLEXED.
WHY DID YOU BEAT ME? DON'T YOU KNOW I HAVE NO FATHER?
WHICH MEANS YOU WILL HAVE TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MOTHER. AND HOW CAN A THIEF TAKE CARE OF HIS MOTHER?
YES... WHAT YOU SAY IS CORRECT... I... I PROMISE I'LL BE A GOOD BOY FROM NOW ON.
RAMDULARI NOTICED THE CHANGE THAT HAD COME OVER LAL BAHADUR.
NANHE IS NO LONGER MISCHIEVOUS. HE SEEMS TO BE GROWING UP.

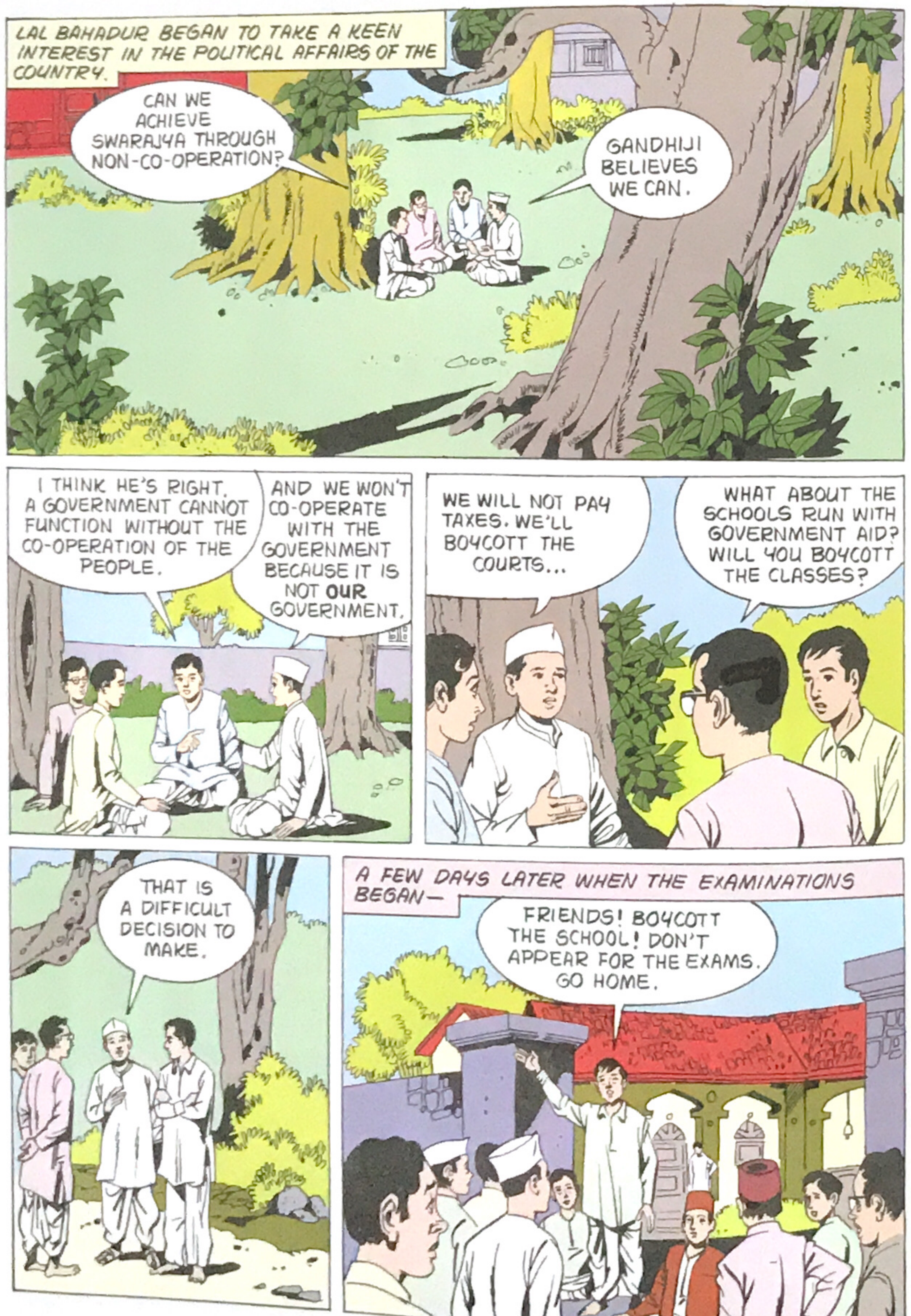




* SIX PAISE OF TODAY

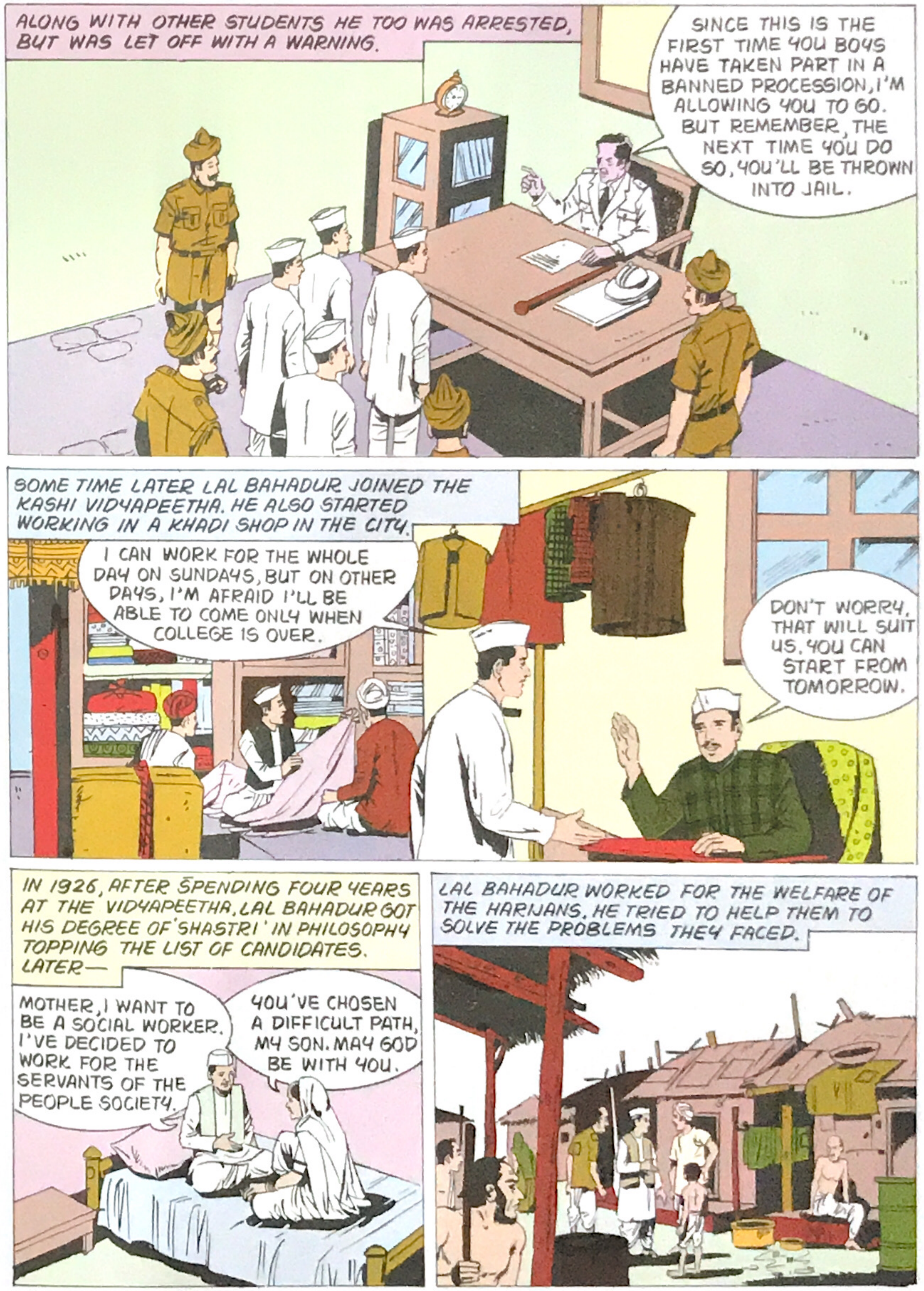

MISHRAJI TOOK LAL BAHADUR TO HIS OWN HOUSE.
BHABO...
BHABO, TELL ME HOW MANY SONS DO WE HAVE?
WHY, THREE...
WRONG, WE HAVE FOUR SONS.
THIS IS OUR FOURTH SON.
THUS LAL BAHADUR FINALLY FOUND THE LOVE HE HAD YEARNED FOR.
BHAIYA, TELL ME THE STORY ABOUT THE LION.
NO! TELL US THE ONE ABOUT THE RABBIT.
DON'T QUARREL. I'LL TELL YOU BOTH THE STORIES.

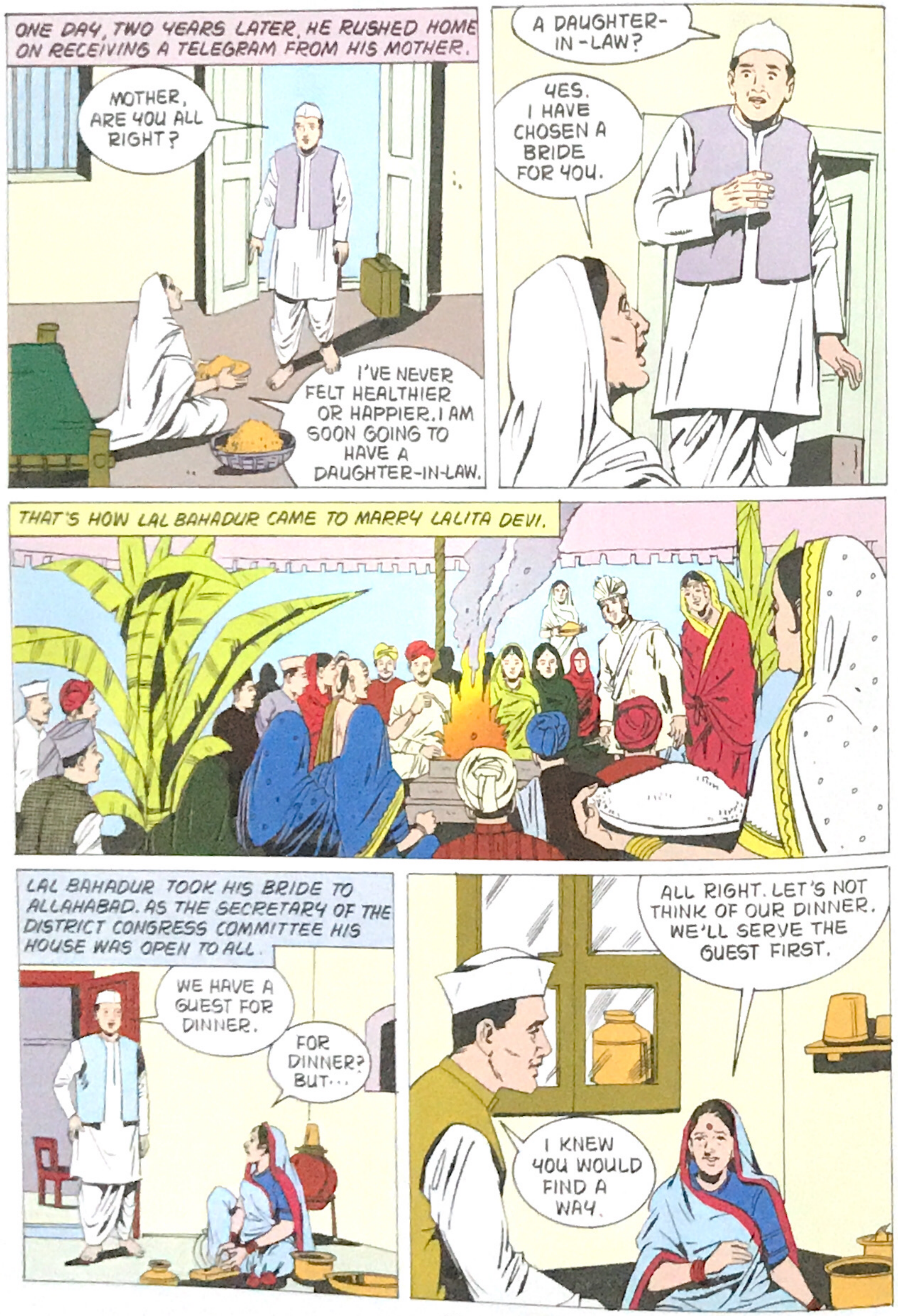

LAL BAHADUR HIMSELF WAS FOND OF LISTENING TO STORIES TOLD BY MISHRAJI — STORIES ABOUT HOW INDIA LOST HER FREEDOM.
THUS, THE BRITISH WHO CAME TO INDIA AS TRADERS STAYED ON TO BECOME OUR RULERS.
AND NATURALLY THEY ARE INTERESTED IN TRADE AND NOT IN THE WELFARE OF OUR PEOPLE.
SIR, CAN'T WE DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?
WHY NOT? WE MUST EDUCATE OUR PEOPLE. WE MUST TELL THEM WHAT THEIR RIGHTS ARE. YOU MUST DO IT WHEN YOU GROW UP.
I WILL, I MUST SERVE MY COUNTRY WHEN I GROW UP.
THEN GANDHIJI CAME TO VARANASI.
WE WILL NOT TOLERATE THE HARSH TREATMENT METED OUT TO US BY THE BRITISH. WE WILL NOT CO-OPERATE WITH THEM. WE HAVE TO GET RID OF THIS SLAVERY AND BUILD A NEW INDIA FOR OURSELVES.

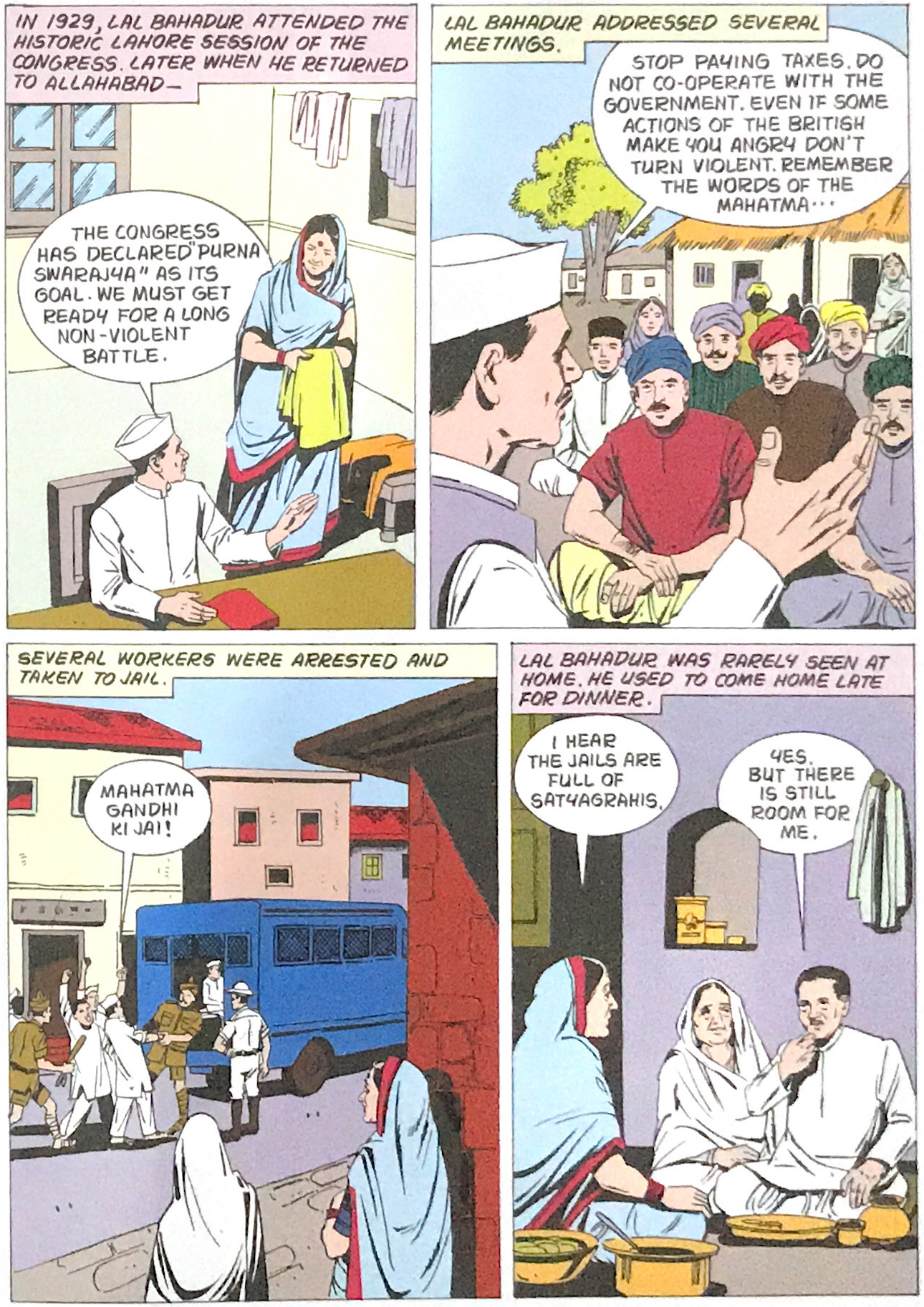

LAL BAHADUR BEGAN TO TAKE A KEEN INTEREST IN THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY.
CAN WE ACHIEVE SWARAJYA THROUGH NON-CO-OPERATION?
GANDHIJI BELIEVES WE CAN.
I THINK HE'S RIGHT. A GOVERNMENT CANNOT FUNCTION WITHOUT THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PEOPLE.
AND WE WON'T CO-OPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT BECAUSE IT IS NOT OUR GOVERNMENT.
WE WILL NOT PAY TAXES. WE'LL BOYCOTT THE COURTS...
WHAT ABOUT THE SCHOOLS RUN WITH GOVERNMENT AID? WILL YOU BOYCOTT THE CLASSES?
THAT IS A DIFFICULT DECISION TO MAKE.
A FEW DAYS LATER WHEN THE EXAMINATIONS BEGAN—
FRIENDS! BOYCOTT THE SCHOOL! DON'T APPEAR FOR THE EXAMS. GO HOME.

BUT WE'LL LOSE A YEAR IF WE DON'T APPEAR.
ALL RIGHT, YOU MAY GO IN, BUT YOU CAN DO SO ONLY BY TRAMPLING OVER US. IF YOU WISH TO DO THAT, GO AHEAD.
WHAT WILL YOU DO LAL BAHADUR?
I'M GOING HOME.
AT HOME—
WHAT! YOU HAVE COME BACK WITHOUT APPEARING FOR THE EXAM!
THIS BOY HAS NO SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY! POOR RAMDULARI! SHE'S WAITING FOR HIM TO START EARNING AND HERE HE GOES AND WASTES A YEAR OF SCHOOL. YOU OUGHT TO BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF!

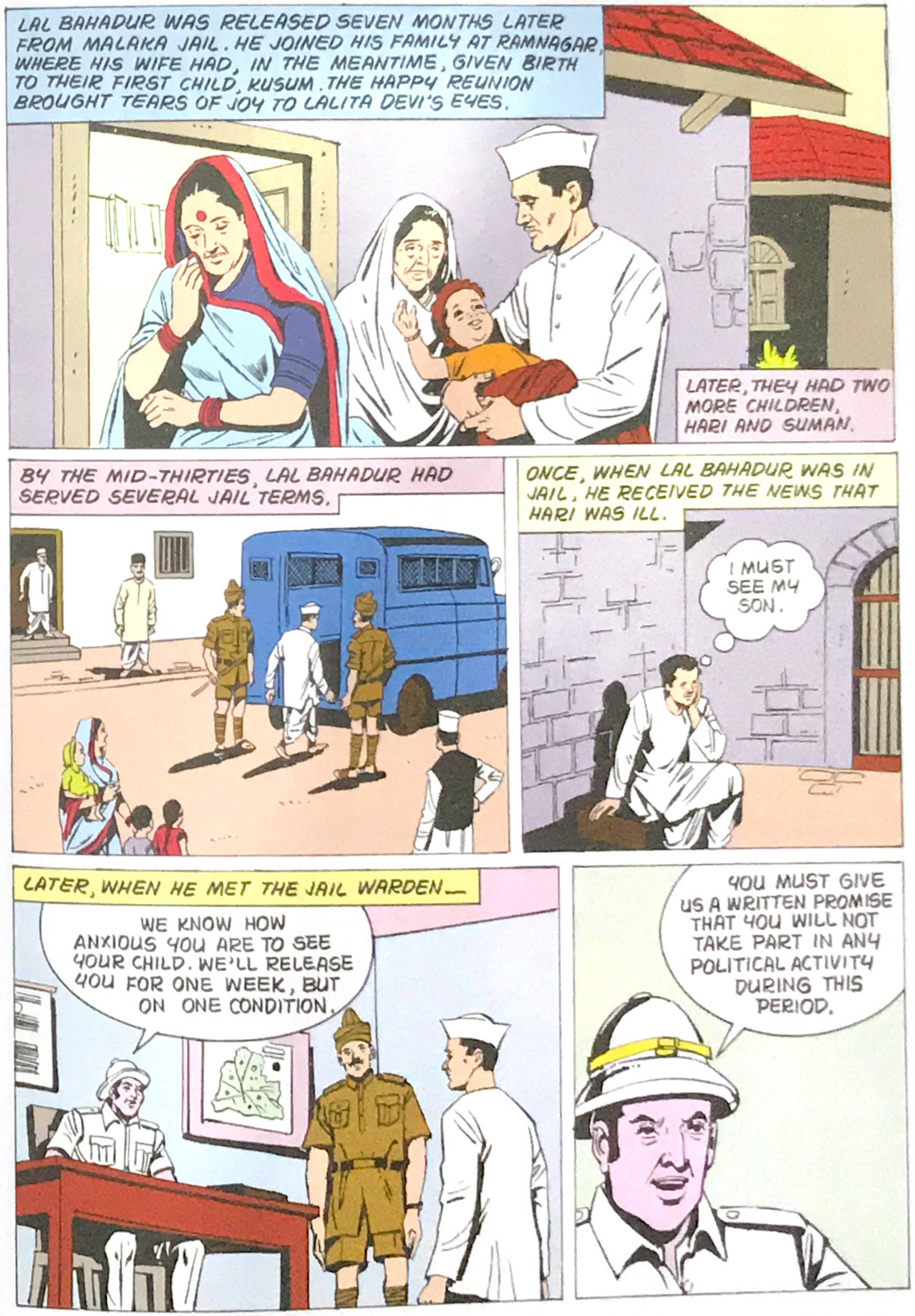
EVEN MISHRAJI DID NOT APPROVE OF LAL BAHADUR'S ACTION.
YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR MIND, LAL BAHADUR. YOU HAVE TO GET YOUR SISTERS MARRIED AS IT IS, YOUR MOTHER IS NOT TOO WELL OFF.
NO, MISHRAJI, I CANNOT RETRACE THE STEP I HAVE TAKEN. I WANT TO SERVE MY COUNTRY.
PATRIOTISM IS ALL RIGHT, MY CHILD. BUT YOU ALSO HAVE TO THINK OF YOUR FAMILY. THEY DEPEND ON YOU.
LATER, WHEN LAL BAHADUR MET HIS MOTHER.
I HAVE FAITH IN YOU, MY SON. DO WHATEVER YOU THINK IS RIGHT. ONLY DON'T CHANGE YOUR MIND ONCE YOU HAVE DECIDED.
OH, THANK YOU, MOTHER. I'M SO RELIEVED.
LAL BAHADUR TOOK AN ACTIVE PART IN THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT.
INQUILAB ZINDABAD!
MAHATMA GANDHI KI JAI!

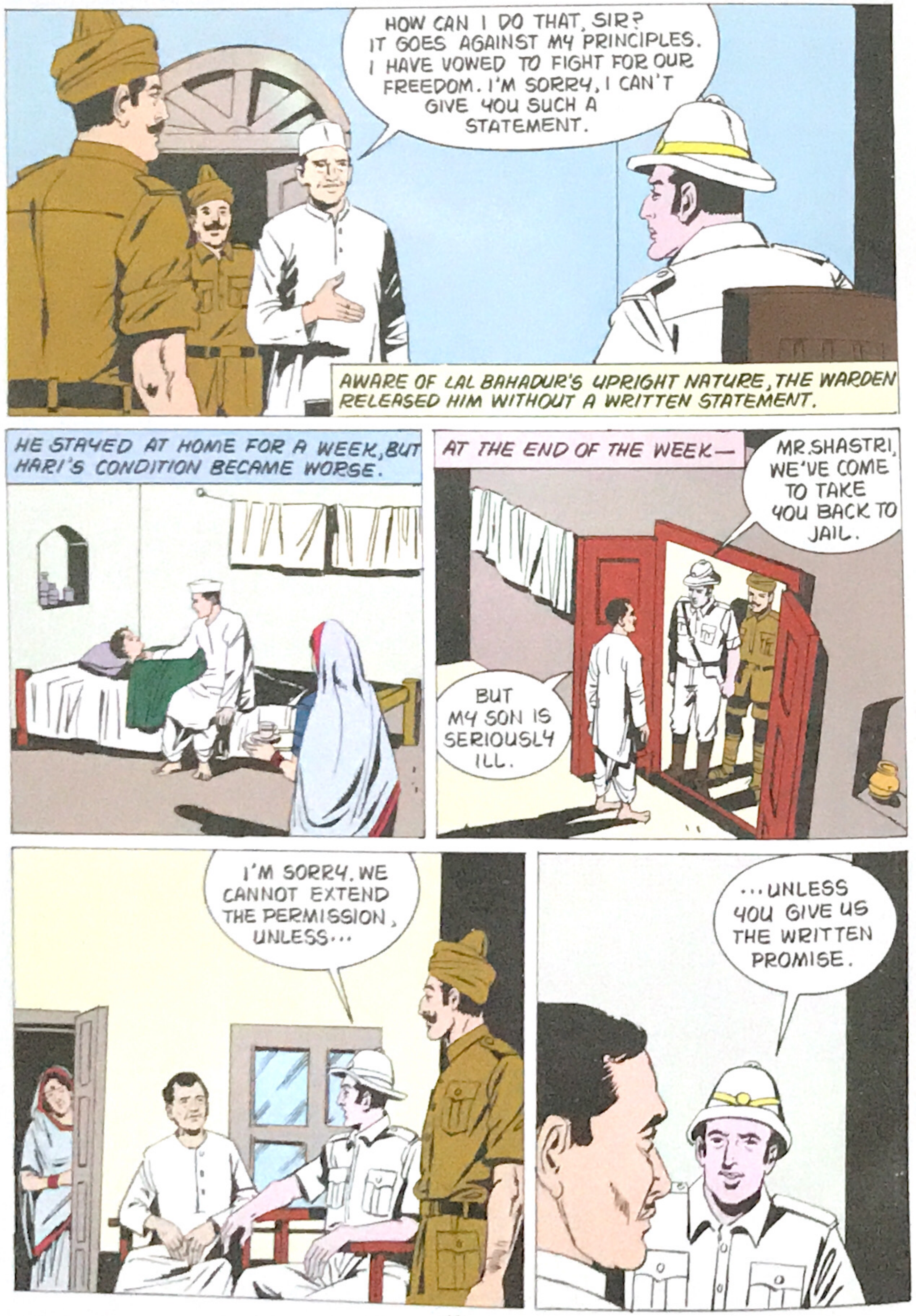

ALONG WITH OTHER STUDENTS HE TOO WAS ARRESTED, BUT WAS LET OFF WITH A WARNING.
SINCE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU BOYS HAVE TAKEN PART IN A BANNED PROCESSION, I'M ALLOWING YOU TO GO. BUT REMEMBER, THE NEXT TIME YOU DO SO, YOU'LL BE THROWN INTO JAIL.
SOME TIME LATER LAL BAHADUR JOINED THE KASHI VIDYAPEETHA. HE ALSO STARTED WORKING IN A KHADI SHOP IN THE CITY.
I CAN WORK FOR THE WHOLE DAY ON SUNDAYS, BUT ON OTHER DAYS, I'M AFRAID I'LL BE ABLE TO COME ONLY WHEN COLLEGE IS OVER.
DON'T WORRY, THAT WILL SUIT US. YOU CAN START FROM TOMORROW.
IN 1926, AFTER SPENDING FOUR YEARS AT THE VIDYAPEETHA, LAL BAHADUR GOT HIS DEGREE OF 'SHASTRI' IN PHILOSOPHY TOPPING THE LIST OF CANDIDATES. LATER—
MOTHER, I WANT TO BE A SOCIAL WORKER. I'VE DECIDED TO WORK FOR THE SERVANTS OF THE PEOPLE SOCIETY.
YOU'VE CHOSEN A DIFFICULT PATH, MY SON. MAY GOD BE WITH YOU.
LAL BAHADUR WORKED FOR THE WELFARE OF THE HARIJANS. HE TRIED TO HELP THEM TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS THEY FACED.


ONE DAY, TWO YEARS LATER, HE RUSHED HOME ON RECEIVING A TELEGRAM FROM HIS MOTHER.
MOTHER, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'VE NEVER FELT HEALTHIER OR HAPPIER. I AM SOON GOING TO HAVE A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.
A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW?
YES. I HAVE CHOSEN A BRIDE FOR YOU.
THAT'S HOW LAL BAHADUR CAME TO MARRY LALITA DEVI.
LAL BAHADUR TOOK HIS BRIDE TO ALLAHABAD. AS THE SECRETARY OF THE DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE HIS HOUSE WAS OPEN TO ALL.
WE HAVE A GUEST FOR DINNER.
FOR DINNER? BUT...
ALL RIGHT. LET'S NOT THINK OF OUR DINNER. WE'LL SERVE THE GUEST FIRST.
I KNEW YOU WOULD FIND A WAY.

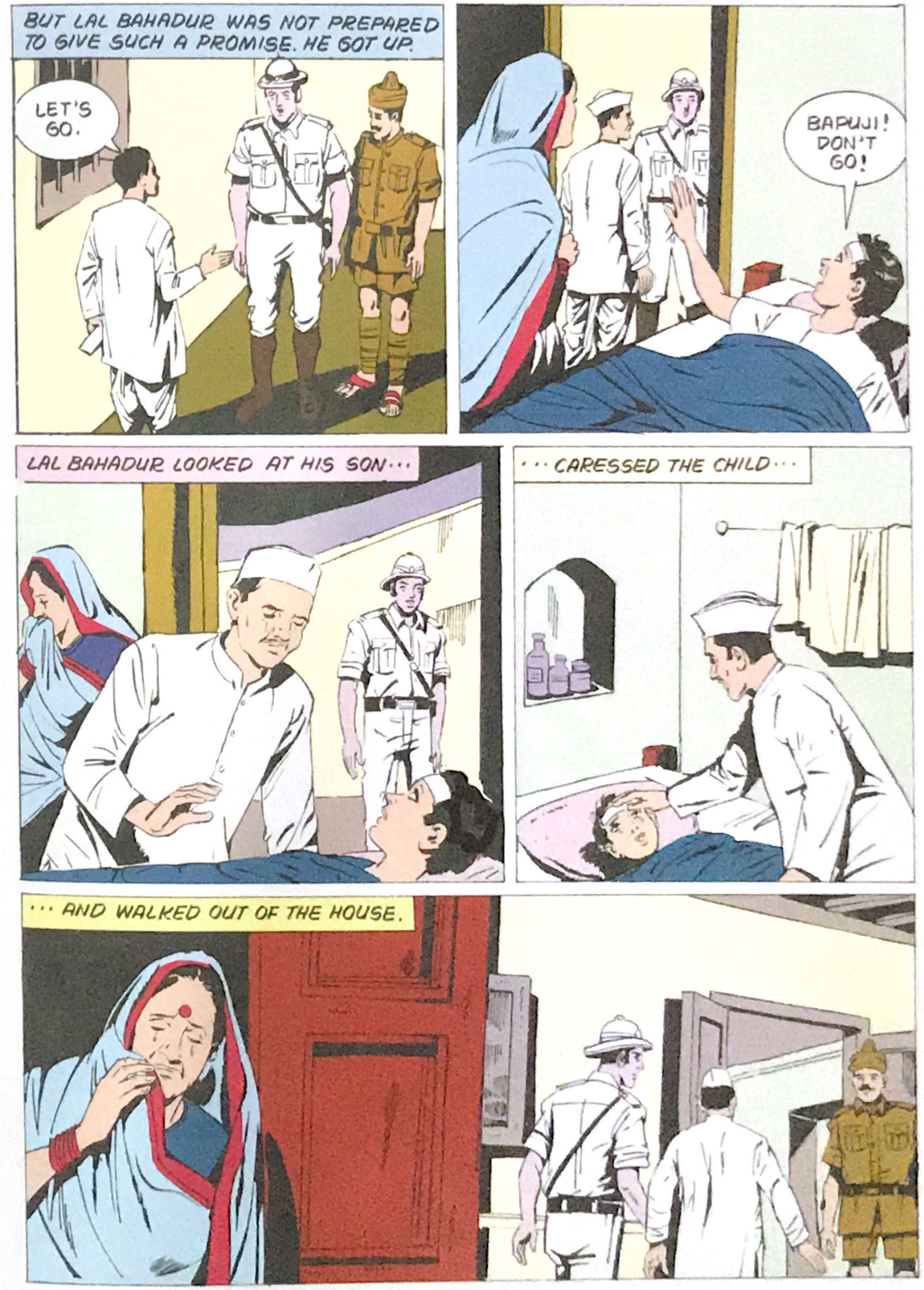

IN 1929, LAL BAHADUR ATTENDED THE HISTORIC LAHORE SESSION OF THE CONGRESS. LATER WHEN HE RETURNED TO ALLAHABAD—
THE CONGRESS HAS DECLARED "PURNA SWARAJYA" AS ITS GOAL. WE MUST GET READY FOR A LONG NON-VIOLENT BATTLE.
LAL BAHADUR ADDRESSED SEVERAL MEETINGS.
STOP PAYING TAXES. DO NOT CO-OPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT. EVEN IF SOME ACTIONS OF THE BRITISH MAKE YOU ANGRY DON'T TURN VIOLENT. REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE MAHATMA...
SEVERAL WORKERS WERE ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO JAIL.
MAHATMA GANDHI KI JAI!
LAL BAHADUR WAS RARELY SEEN AT HOME. HE USED TO COME HOME LATE FOR DINNER.
I HEAR THE JAILS ARE FULL OF SATYAGRAHIS.
YES. BUT THERE IS STILL ROOM FOR ME.

FOR YOU?
DON'T GET FRIGHTENED. I TOO MIGHT BE ARRESTED.
I WILL FEEL VERY UNHAPPY IF YOU CRY WHEN I'M ARRESTED. YOU MUST FACE IT WITH A SMILE, IF YOU LOVE ME.
WHAT HE WAS EXPECTING SOON HAPPENED. A FEW DAYS LATER—
MAHATMA GANDHI KI JAI.
INQUILAB ZINDABAD!
LALITA DEVI RUSHED TO THE WINDOW—
NO, NO, IT CAN'T BE.
YOU MUST FACE IT WITH A SMILE, IF YOU LOVE ME...
I MUST NOT CRY. LORD, GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO BEAR IT.

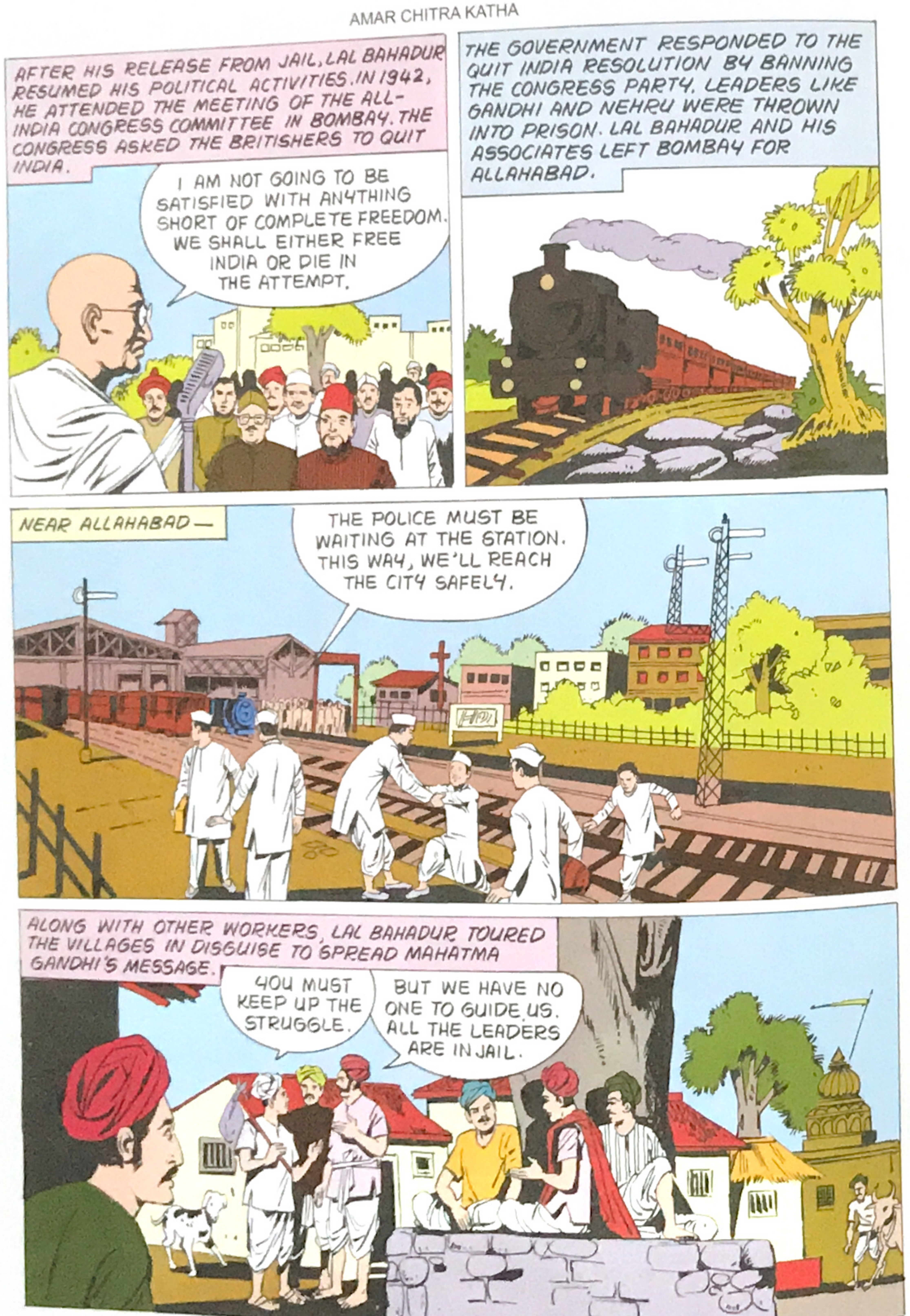

LAL BAHADUR WAS RELEASED SEVEN MONTHS LATER FROM MALAKA JAIL. HE JOINED HIS FAMILY AT RAMNAGAR, WHERE HIS WIFE HAD, IN THE MEANTIME, GIVEN BIRTH TO THEIR FIRST CHILD, KUSUM. THE HAPPY REUNION BROUGHT TEARS OF JOY TO LALITA DEVI'S EYES.
LATER, THEY HAD TWO MORE CHILDREN, HARI AND SUMAN.
BY THE MID-THIRTIES, LAL BAHADUR HAD SERVED SEVERAL JAIL TERMS.
ONCE, WHEN LAL BAHADUR WAS IN JAIL, HE RECEIVED THE NEWS THAT HARI WAS ILL.
I MUST SEE MY SON.
LATER, WHEN HE MET THE JAIL WARDEN—
WE KNOW HOW ANXIOUS YOU ARE TO SEE YOUR CHILD. WE'LL RELEASE YOU FOR ONE WEEK, BUT ON ONE CONDITION.
YOU MUST GIVE US A WRITTEN PROMISE THAT YOU WILL NOT TAKE PART IN ANY POLITICAL ACTIVITY DURING THIS PERIOD.



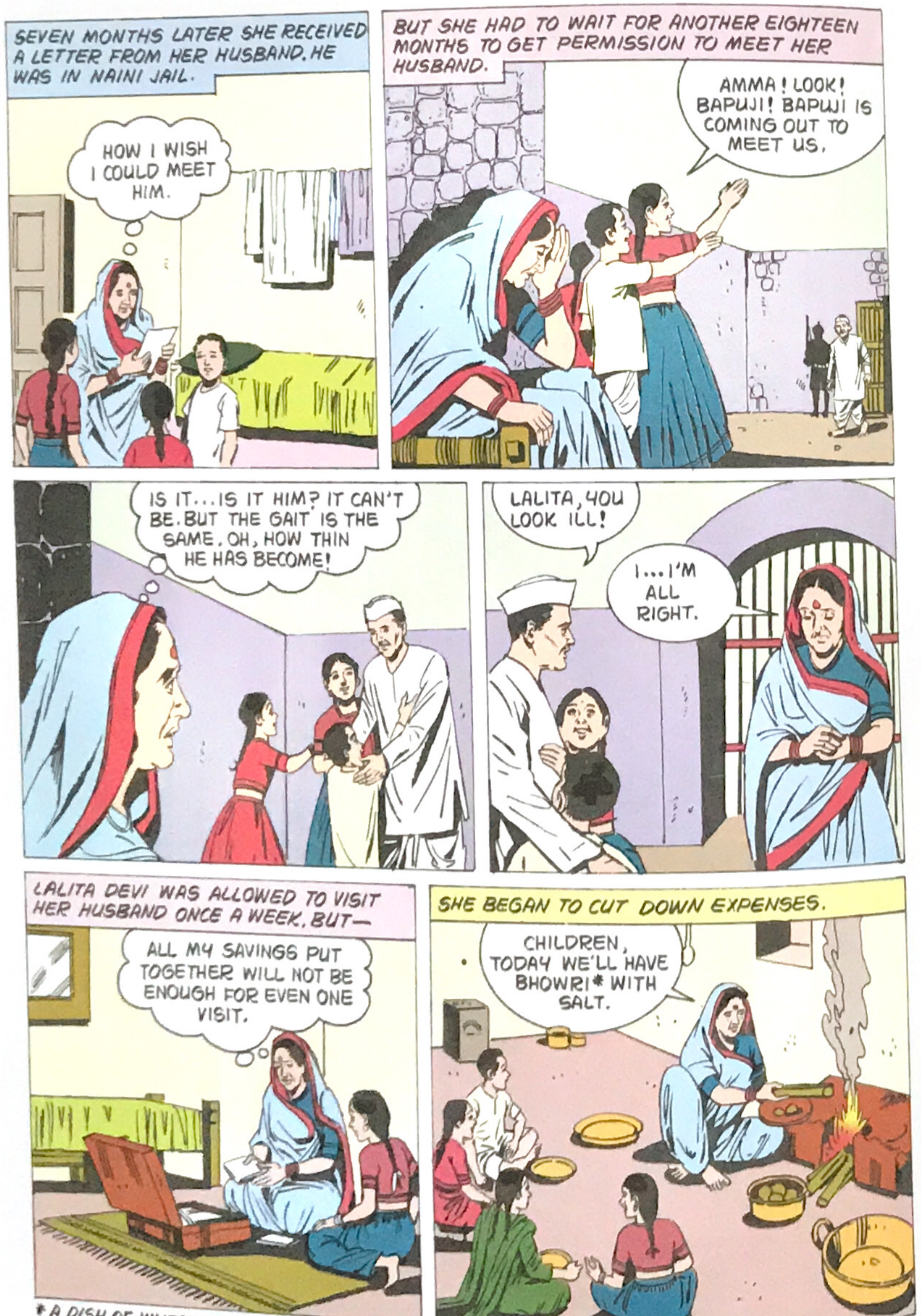
HOW CAN I DO THAT, SIR? IT GOES AGAINST MY PRINCIPLES. I HAVE VOWED TO FIGHT FOR OUR FREEDOM. I'M SORRY, I CAN'T GIVE YOU SUCH A STATEMENT.
AWARE OF LAL BAHADUR'S UPRIGHT NATURE, THE WARDEN RELEASED HIM WITHOUT A WRITTEN STATEMENT.
HE STAYED AT HOME FOR A WEEK, BUT HARI'S CONDITION BECAME WORSE.
AT THE END OF THE WEEK—
MR. SHASTRI, WE'VE COME TO TAKE YOU BACK TO JAIL.
BUT MY SON IS SERIOUSLY ILL.
I'M SORRY. WE CANNOT EXTEND THE PERMISSION, UNLESS...
...UNLESS YOU GIVE US THE WRITTEN PROMISE.



BUT LAL BAHADUR WAS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE SUCH A PROMISE. HE GOT UP.
LET'S GO.
BAPUJI! DON'T GO!
LAL BAHADUR LOOKED AT HIS SON...
...CARESSED THE CHILD...
... AND WALKED OUT OF THE HOUSE.

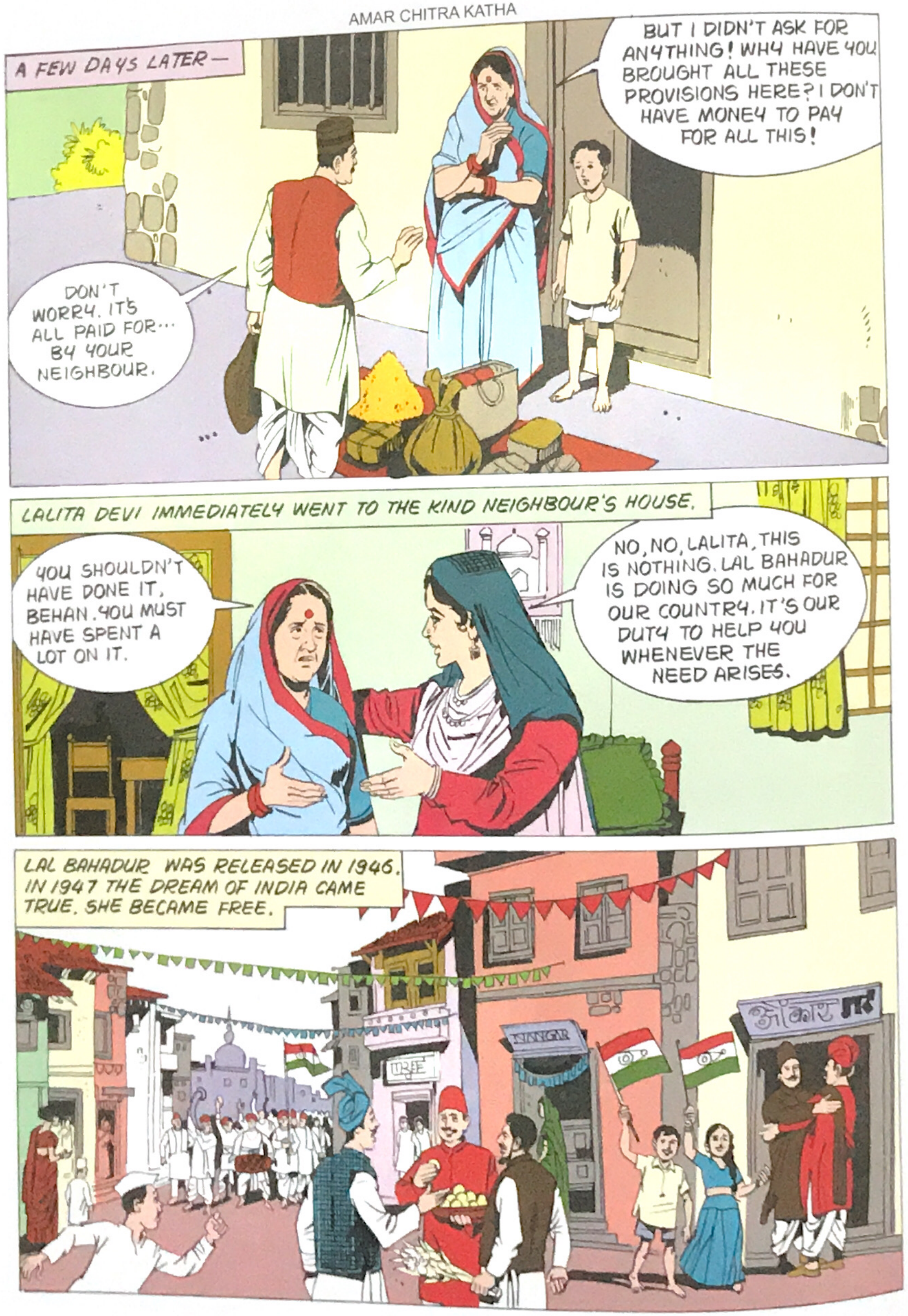

AFTER HIS RELEASE FROM JAIL, LAL BAHADUR RESUMED HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. IN 1942, HE ATTENDED THE MEETING OF THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE IN BOMBAY. THE CONGRESS ASKED THE BRITISHERS TO QUIT INDIA.
I AM NOT GOING TO BE SATISFIED WITH ANYTHING SHORT OF COMPLETE FREEDOM. WE SHALL EITHER FREE INDIA OR DIE IN THE ATTEMPT.
THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDED TO THE QUIT INDIA RESOLUTION BY BANNING THE CONGRESS PARTY. LEADERS LIKE GANDHI AND NEHRU WERE THROWN INTO PRISON. LAL BAHADUR AND HIS ASSOCIATES LEFT BOMBAY FOR ALLAHABAD.
NEAR ALLAHABAD —
THE POLICE MUST BE WAITING AT THE STATION. THIS WAY, WE'LL REACH THE CITY SAFELY.
ALONG WITH OTHER WORKERS, LAL BAHADUR TOURED THE VILLAGES IN DISGUISE TO SPREAD MAHATMA GANDHI'S MESSAGE.
YOU MUST KEEP UP THE STRUGGLE.
BUT WE HAVE NO ONE TO GUIDE US. ALL THE LEADERS ARE IN JAIL.

YOU ARE YOUR OWN LEADER. GANDHIJI SAYS EVERY INDIAN WHO WANTS FREEDOM MUST BE HIS OWN GUIDE. EVERY ONE HAS TO MAKE AN EFFORT IN ORDER TO BE INDEPENDENT.
A FEW DAYS LATER, LAL BAHADUR WAS ABOUT TO ADDRESS A MEETING AT THE CLOCK TOWER, ALLAHABAD...
...WHEN THE POLICE ARRESTED HIM.
LAL BAHADUR WAS TAKEN TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION. LALITA DEVI WENT TO MIRZAPUR, WHERE SHE FELL ILL. THOSE WERE HARD DAYS FOR THE FAMILY.
I DON'T MIND POVERTY. I CAN PUT UP WITH HUNGER. IF ONLY I KNEW WHERE MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN TAKEN...

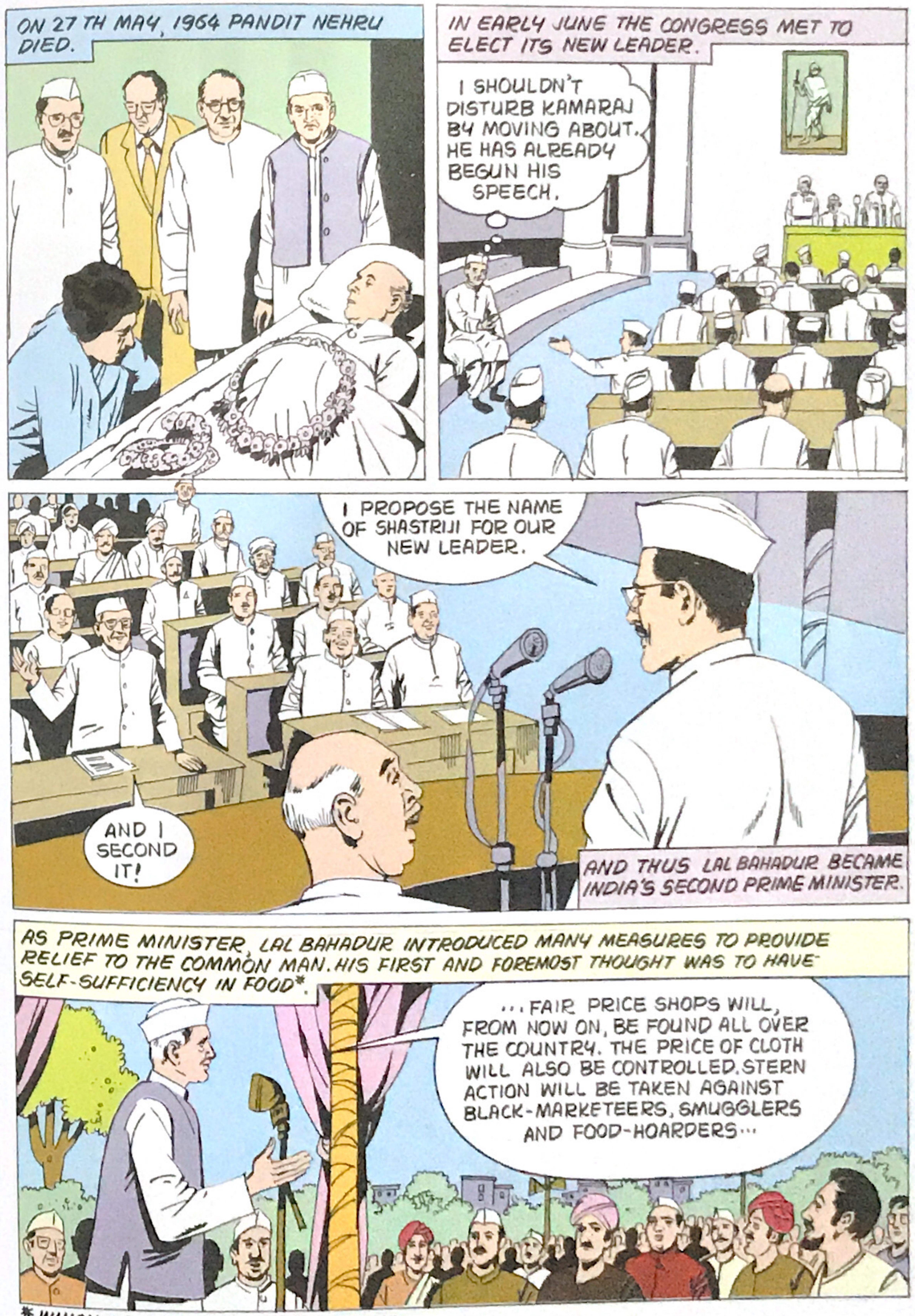


* A DISH OF WHEAT FLOUR

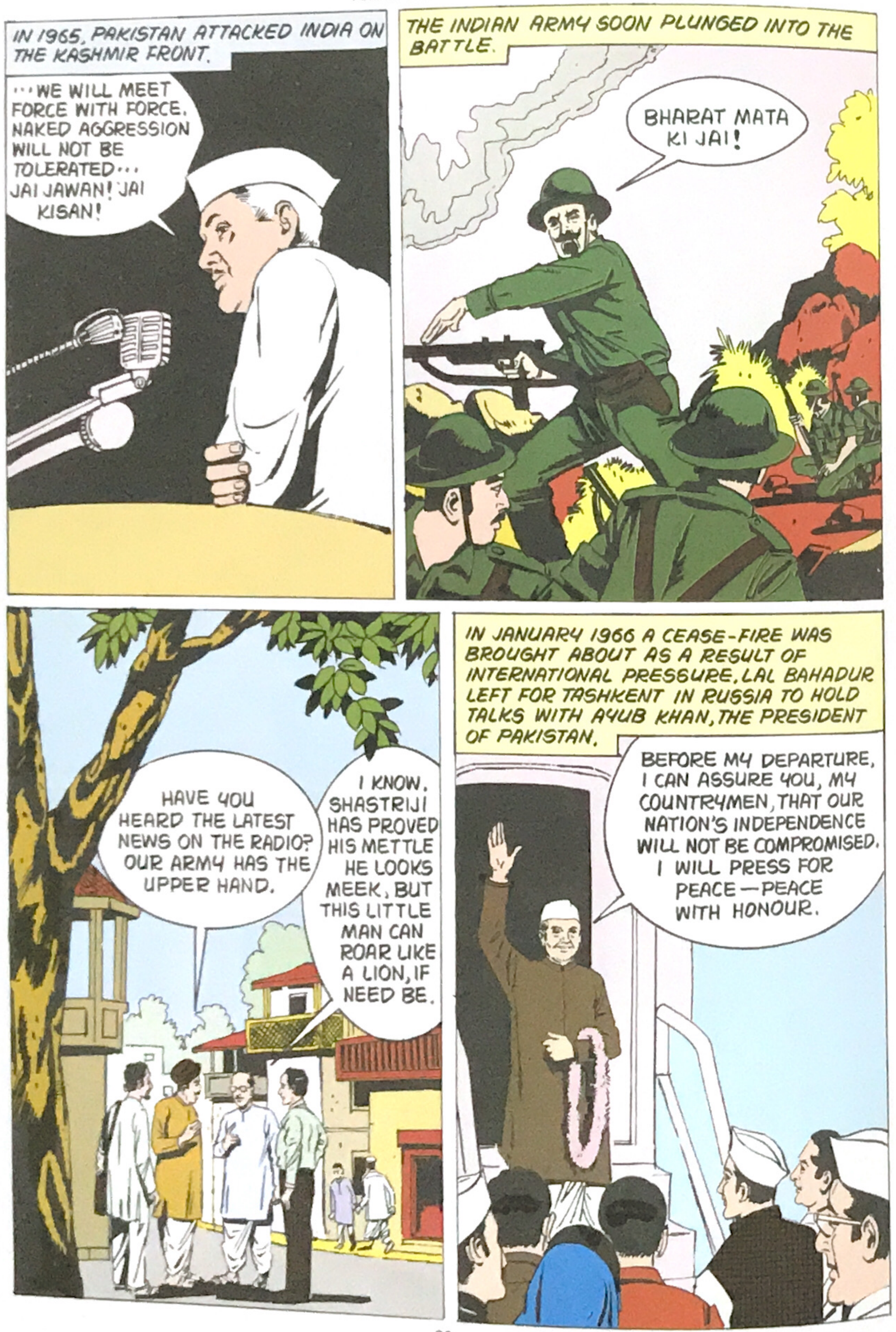
* SISTER

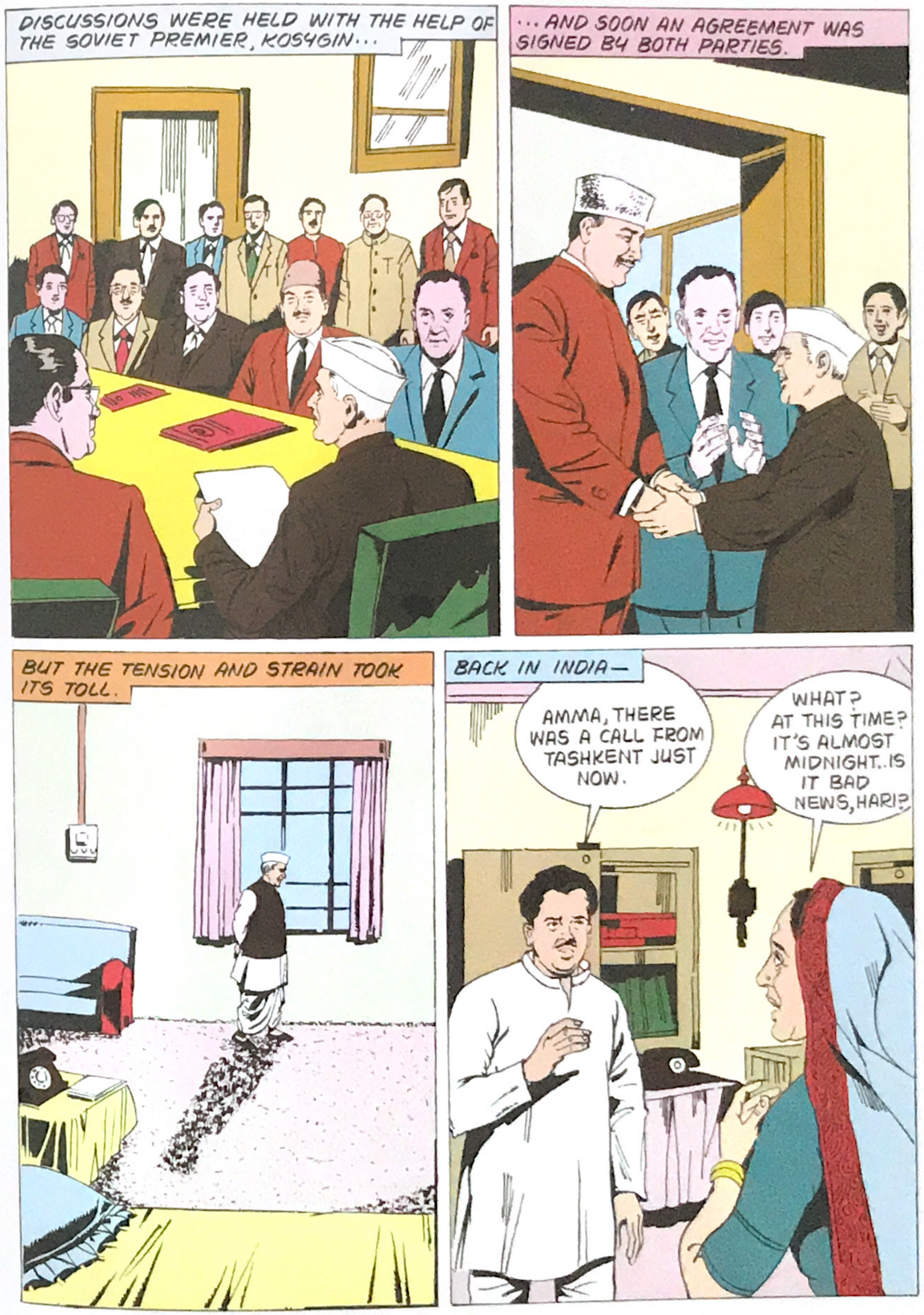

A FEW DAYS LATER—
BUT I DIDN'T ASK FOR ANYTHING! WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ALL THESE PROVISIONS HERE? I DON'T HAVE MONEY TO PAY FOR ALL THIS!
DON'T WORRY. IT'S ALL PAID FOR... BY YOUR NEIGHBOUR.
LALITA DEVI IMMEDIATELY WENT TO THE KIND NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT, BEHAN. YOU MUST HAVE SPENT A LOT ON IT.
NO, NO, LALITA, THIS IS NOTHING. LAL BAHADUR IS DOING SO MUCH FOR OUR COUNTRY. IT'S OUR DUTY TO HELP YOU WHENEVER THE NEED ARISES.
LAL BAHADUR WAS RELEASED IN 1946. IN 1947 THE DREAM OF INDIA CAME TRUE. SHE BECAME FREE.

LAL BAHADUR WAS MADE MINISTER FOR THE POLICE IN U.P. IN ORDER TO FULFIL HIS DUTIES, HE OFTEN HAD TO VISIT VARIOUS CITIES. ONCE WHEN HE WENT TO AGRA—
I WONDER WHY THERE ARE SO MANY POLICEMEN AT THE STATION. THERE ARE SOME CONGRESSMEN TOO!
WHEN HE GOT DOWN—
TELL ME BHAIYA, WHAT IS ALL THIS ABOUT? IS SOME DIGNITARY COMING HERE TODAY?
DON'T YOU KNOW? THE POLICE MINISTER SAHIB IS COMING. BY THIS VERY TRAIN. EVERYONE HAS GATHERED TO RECEIVE HIM.
PLEASE STAND ASIDE. NO ONE CAN LEAVE TILL THE MINISTER SAHIB LEAVES THE STATION. DON'T BLOCK THE WAY.
DON'T WORRY. I WON'T TROUBLE YOU. I'LL WAIT.
EXIT
THAT MAN YOU WERE TALKING TO IS THE POLICE MINISTER.
COME ON! I'D BE A FOOL TO BELIEVE YOU. A MINISTER WOULD HAVE HALF A DOZEN MEN AROUND HIM. HE WOULDN'T BE ALONE. NOW, NOW, THIS IS NO TIME FOR JOKING.
EXIT

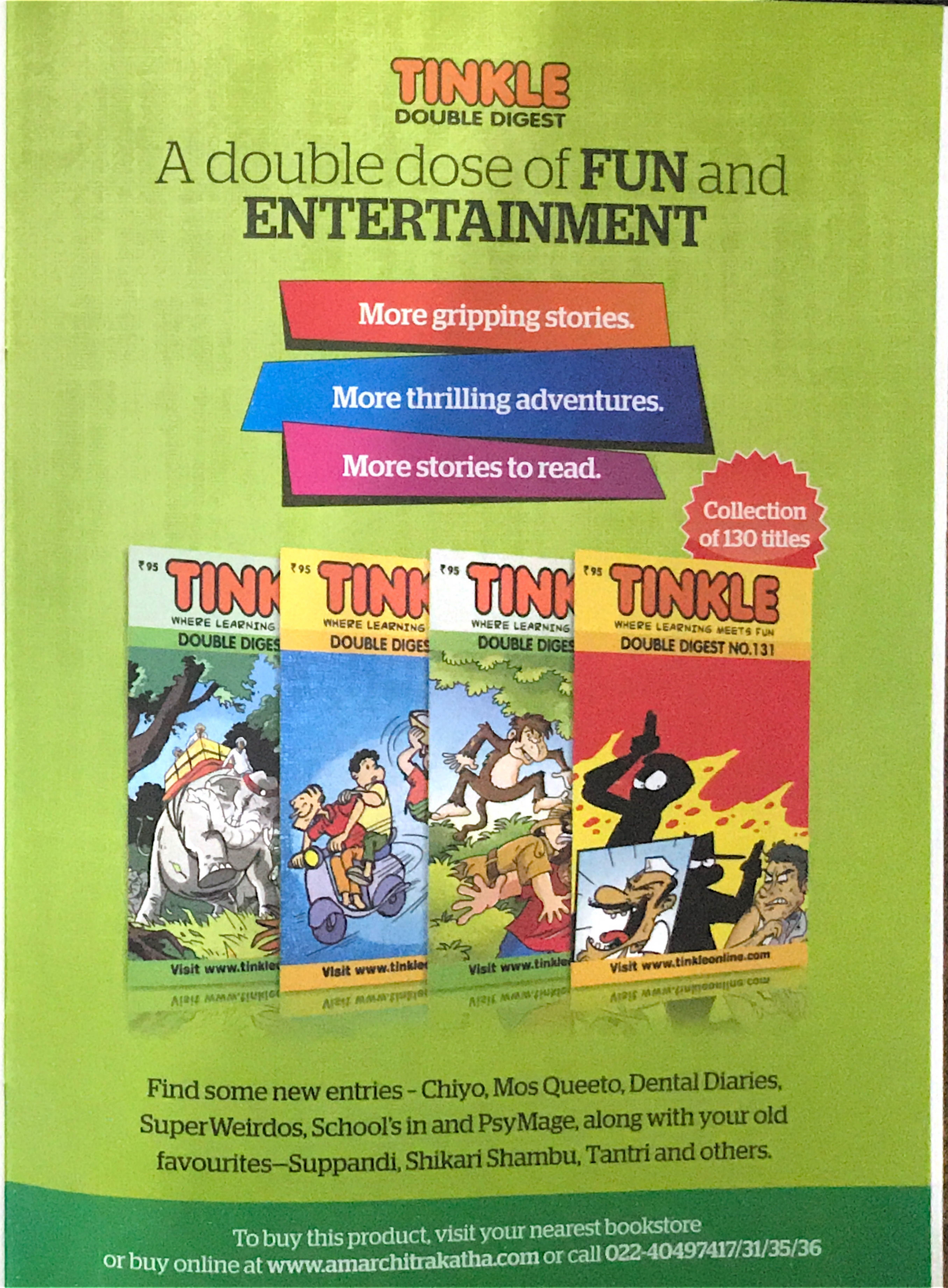


* WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED


IN 1965, PAKISTAN ATTACKED INDIA ON THE KASHMIR FRONT.
...WE WILL MEET FORCE WITH FORCE. NAKED AGGRESSION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED... JAI JAWAN! JAI KISAN!
THE INDIAN ARMY SOON PLUNGED INTO THE BATTLE.
BHARAT MATA KI JAI!
HAVE YOU HEARD THE LATEST NEWS ON THE RADIO? OUR ARMY HAS THE UPPER HAND.
I KNOW. SHASTRIJI HAS PROVED HIS METTLE. HE LOOKS MEEK, BUT THIS LITTLE MAN CAN ROAR LIKE A LION, IF NEED BE.
IN JANUARY 1966 A CEASE-FIRE WAS BROUGHT ABOUT AS A RESULT OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE. LAL BAHADUR LEFT FOR TASHKENT IN RUSSIA TO HOLD TALKS WITH AYUB KHAN, THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN.
BEFORE MY DEPARTURE, I CAN ASSURE YOU, MY COUNTRYMEN, THAT OUR NATION'S INDEPENDENCE WILL NOT BE COMPROMISED. I WILL PRESS FOR PEACE — PEACE WITH HONOUR.


DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD WITH THE HELP OF THE SOVIET PREMIER, KOSYGIN...
...AND SOON AN AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BY BOTH PARTIES.
BUT THE TENSION AND STRAIN TOOK ITS TOLL.
BACK IN INDIA—
AMMA, THERE WAS A CALL FROM TASHKENT JUST NOW.
WHAT? AT THIS TIME? IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT..IS IT BAD NEWS, HARI?

YES AMMA, BAPUJI HAS SUDDENLY TAKEN ILL.
THEY SAID THEY WOULD RING UP AGAIN AND LET US KNOW HOW HE IS.
OH, GOD! OH, GOD!
SOMETIME LATER—
YES, HARI SPEAKING... NO, NO... THAT CAN'T BE... HE CAN'T GO LIKE THIS...
AND SO INDIA LOST ANOTHER ILLUSTRIOUS SON.
THE BHARAT RATNA AWARD WAS CONFERRED UPON HIM POSTHUMOUSLY.
...THE CONFLICT WITH PAKISTAN... SHOCKED OUR PEOPLE... SHASTRIJI WENT TO TASHKENT TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT WITH PAKISTAN. THE EFFORT AND STRAIN INVOLVED BROUGHT ABOUT HIS END. HE DIED PLEDGING OUR TWO COUNTRIES WORKING FOR PEACE AND FRIENDLINESS, FORGETTING THE BITTERNESS OF THE PAST YEARS...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